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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
HOBBS'S *LEVIATHAN*

The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's 'Leviathan' makes a new departure in Hobbes scholarship, addressing a philosopher whose major works, including *Leviathan*, were published in Latin on the Continent and whose impact was as great on Continental European theories of state and legal systems as it was at home. This volume is a systematic attempt to incorporate work from both the Anglophone and Continental traditions, bringing together newly commissioned work by scholars from ten different countries in a topic-by-topic sequence of essays that follows the structure of *Leviathan*, reexamining the relationship among Hobbes's physics, metaphysics, politics, psychology, and religion. Collectively they showcase important revisionist scholarship that recontextualizes *Leviathan* and its reception, demonstrating the degree to which Hobbes was indebted to the long tradition of European humanist thought. This *Cambridge Companion* shows that Hobbes's legacy was never lost and that he belongs to a tradition of reflection on political theory and governance that is still alive, both in Europe and in the diaspora.

Patricia Springborg, formerly a professor in political theory at the University of Sydney, is now professor in the School of Economics of the Free University of Bolzano, Italy. A member of the Australian Academy of the Social Sciences, she has been a visiting Fellow at research institutes in Berlin, Oxford, and Uppsala, and was the recipient of a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Award, taken up at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. She is the author of *The Problem of Human Needs and the Critique of Civilization*, *Royal Persons*, *Western Republicanism and the Oriental Prince*, *Mary Astell: Theorist of Freedom from Domination*, and three editions of Mary Astell's writings. She has also published a number of articles on Hobbes and has coedited a critical edition of Hobbes's *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

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HOBBS'S *LEVIATHAN*

Edited by Patricia Springborg

University of Sydney

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METHOD OF CITATION

Beh., *Behemoth*, or *The Long Parliament* [1679], ed. Ferdinand Tönnies (London, 1889, facsimile edn., ed. Stephen Holmes, Chicago, University of Chicago, 1990). All citations to *Behemoth* (*Beh.*) are to the Tönnies edition unless otherwise noted.

DCo = *De Corpore (Elementorum philosophiae sectio prima)* [1655], introduction, édition critique latine, annotation par Karl Schuhmann, *Thomas Hobbes oeuvres complètes* (Paris, Vrin, 1999), cited by chapter in roman numerals and paragraph in arabic numerals.

Dialogue = *Dialogue Concerning the Common Laws* [1681], 1681 (*EW*, VI), in *Hobbes, Writings on Common Law and Hereditary Right*, ed. Alan Cromartie and Quentin Skinner (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2005), unless otherwise indicated.

DM = Th. Hobbes: ms. Paris BN lat. 6566A, untitled. Th. Hobbes, *Critique du De Mundo de Thomas White*. Edition critique d'un texte inédit par Jean Jaquot et Harold Whitmore Jones (Paris, Vrin, 1973).

DNB = *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995).

EW = *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. Sir William Molesworth, 11 vols. (London, Bohn, 1839–45).

Hobbes, *Correspondence* = Hobbes, *The Correspondence*, ed. Noel Malcolm, Clarendon Edition of the Works of Hobbes (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994), vols. 6 and 7.

Hist. Narr. = *Historical Narration Concerning Heresy*, 1668 (*EW*, IV).

Lev., *Leviathan*, = *Leviathan* [1651], with selected variants from the Latin edition of 1668 ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis,

Hackett Publishing Company, 1994), referencing chapter (small Roman numerals), section (Arabic numerals), followed by pagination of the Head edition/the Curley edition.

OL = Thomae Hobbes . . . Opera Philosophica quae Latine scripsit omnia, Sir William Molesworth, ed., 5 vols. (London, Bohn, 1839–45).

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
HOBBS'S *LEVIATHAN*

General Introduction

Hobbes's *Leviathan* is arguably the most brilliant and influential political treatise ever written in English, and it certainly stands as the first major work of English political philosophy embedded in an encyclopaedic corpus. But it has long awaited an authoritative English critical edition and was until recently rarely read in its entirety.¹ Even in Germany, where pioneering bibliographical work on Hobbes's texts was undertaken by Ferdinand Tönnies, an important political theorist in his own right, Hobbes was mostly read in an abridged edition that omitted the last two books, which comprise more than half the length of the original work. These two books, 'Of a Christian Commonwealth' and 'Of the Kingdom of Darkness', are important sources for Hobbes's theology, and were very controversial in his day. Recent critical debate suggests that they are now again controversial.

In *Leviathan* Hobbes gave institutional sanction to the principle on which the great schism created by the Protestant Reformation was decided: *cuius regio eius religio*; it was up to the godly prince to decide religious orthodoxy. On this principle, the peace of Westphalia of 1648, which closed half a century of religious wars and marked the creation of the modern international system of states, was founded. Sect and schism are persistent *topoi* of Hobbes's works, beginning with his 1645 debate with Bishop Bramhall in Paris, conducted under the auspices of the Earl of Newcastle but published only in 1654, and dominating his works of the 1660s, written when Hobbes was himself under threat of indictment for blasphemy and possible heresy. But heresy was a much older issue, arising initially due to the contamination of the faith of Christ and his apostles by the Greek sects

of the Roman and Hellenistic empires, Hobbes maintained. Its roots lay in excessive philosophizing about the Christian mysteries, and a failure to observe the simple principles of faith contained in the Scriptures, causing the Church to lose its way and to create parallel ecclesiastical structures of power to challenge the state.

Heresy was precisely the issue over which the Church had struggled in the third and fourth century synods and councils in which the central dogmas of the Christian mysteries were established. We know that Hobbes considered the doctrinal struggles of these councils a defining moment for the Church from the fact that he too wrote an *Historia Ecclesiastica*, a work in the long tradition of historiography that included the *Historiae Ecclesiasticae* by the fourth century Eusebius, by the Arian Philostorgius, by the Nestorian Theodoret, by Sozomen, by Socrates of Constantinople, by Evagrius of a later generation, by Bede, and by the fourteenth century Ptolemy of Lucca, interlocutor with Aquinas. Hobbes's ecclesiology in his own *Church History* has yet to be reconciled with the received wisdom about the last two books of *Leviathan*.²

Efforts to restore the integrity of *Leviathan*, and particularly the last two books, have not produced consensus on many of Hobbes's most central views hitherto. There is simply no agreement on whether or not Hobbes was sincere in his religious views, the degree to which they are representative of standard positions in the theological discourse of the day, or whether they were intentionally heretical or seditious. Positions vary from the more sceptical views of Edwin Curley and David Berman,³ the latter accusing Hobbes of 'theological lying', to the more cautious positions of Karl Schuhmann, Arrigo Pacchi, Gianni Paganini and Cees Leijenhorst, who argue rather that Hobbes's views were Aristotelian, Epicurean or Sceptic in the antique sense.⁴ Gianni Paganini, by ingenious textual archaeology, has demonstrated that some of Hobbes's ideas trace a direct line of descent from Lorenzo Valla through Erasmus, who had read and annotated Valla's *Elegantiae* at the age of eighteen, and who discovered and published Valla's *Adnotationes in Novum Testamentum* in 1505;⁵ and finally, one might add, to Luther.

George Wright, translator of the 1668 Appendix to the Latin *Leviathan*, in which Hobbes retracts his controversial views on the Trinity in the English *Leviathan*, only to itemize views equally controversial on the Nicene Creed, has shown Hobbes's affinity with the

views of Luther on the role of Scripture, witnesses, and minimalist views about the Soul and the Heavenly Kingdom.⁶ Wright and Martinich represent English-language commentators who take Hobbes's religious views as those of a serious Christian.⁷ Jeffrey Collins's revisionist Hobbes, by contrast, is first and foremost an Erastian and secondly a Cromwellian, just because Cromwell's religious settlement freed the state from the rule of bishops and their 'ghostly' parallel sphere of spiritual power, the most notable example being the Church of Rome and its pope, the 'Ghost of the Roman Empire', but not just the pope, equally Laudian bishops and Presbyterians who claimed *jure divino* powers. The degree to which *Leviathan* was received both at home and abroad as a libertine and Erastian work,⁸ subversive of episcopacy, is demonstrated by the reaction of the Presbyterian printers, a case study developed here by Collins in 'The Silencing of Thomas Hobbes', that nicely illustrates his general thesis.

It is not too much to claim that resituating Hobbes's *Leviathan* has been a major accomplishment of twentieth-century political theory, and in particular of the Cambridge Contextual Historians, Quentin Skinner, John Pocock, and their students.⁹ The restoration of the missing last two books is a large part of the story, for it is clear that the theological books are integral to the whole. But these modern debates about the significance of *Leviathan* are spread over journals and edited volumes in all the languages in which Hobbes scholars are operating, and have rarely been brought together between two covers in relation to the structure of the text itself. No collected edition of recent scholarship on Hobbes's theology and ecclesiology exists, much less a critical commentary on *Leviathan* that would integrate these elements, working through topics in all four books. This volume of new essays commissioned from leading contemporary Hobbes scholars attempts to redress this lack. It roughly follows the order of presentation of topics in *Leviathan* and, although necessarily selective, demonstrates the considerable undertaking of twentieth-century political philosophy to recover the integrity of Hobbes's work.

The *OED* tells us that Hobbes's *Leviathan* changed forever the meaning of the word, which originally connoted the biblical sea monster or whale, familiar from Isaiah and the Book of Job, but with Hobbes became an epithet for the all-powerful state. From its

publication in 1651 on, *Leviathan* was greeted by a storm of controversy, both in England, where Hobbes became the target of a parliamentary enquiry during the 1660s into possible blasphemy charges, and on the Continent, where its reception had already been foreshadowed with the publication of his Latin *De Cive*. Hobbes's desire to participate in cosmopolitan humanist discourse prompted him to translate *Leviathan* into Latin also, the language of Western humanism. *Leviathan* continued to have a life of its own in the subsequent history of European political thought, lending its title, for instance, to the work by Carl Schmitt, the German jurist and practitioner notoriously influential under the Third Reich, whose reflections on Hobbes's famous use of the ancient aphorism *homo homini lupus* led to a theory of generalized hostility to the other in a world divided between *Freund und Feind* (friend and foe).¹⁰ Schmitt met his own foe in Franz Neumann, whose critical analysis of Nazism borrowed another Hobbes title: *Behemoth: The Structure and Function of National Socialism*, while the controversy between Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss, of enormous consequence in the history of political thought, takes Hobbes as its reference point.¹¹ Only recently has Strauss's important early work on Hobbes's radical Enlightenment Deism been republished in German and translated into French, and it still awaits an English translation.¹²

The volume of Hobbes scholarship over three and a half centuries is of course vast. But until recently the divide between Hobbes's English works and his Latin works has been paralleled by a divide between English language and Continental Hobbes scholarship.¹³ Hobbes, like Locke, spent time in exile on the Continent. As a peripheral member of the Stuart Court in France in the 1640s, he belonged to important scholarly circles centred around Mersenne and Descartes. He is thus a philosopher whom the French, for good reason, also claim. Early in his career, together with his charges, the young Cavendish sons, Hobbes had undertaken the European Grand Tour on three separate occasions. On one of these he was reported to have met Galileo and Paolo Sarpi and, on his return, translated for his patron, William Cavendish Duke of Devonshire, Italian correspondence from Fulgenzio Micanzio, Sarpi's associate, on Venice's problems with the pope. The reception of Hobbes in France, Italy and Germany has given rise to schools of scholarship in those countries, producing traditions of thinking about Hobbes that

have yet to be fully integrated into the corpus of English-language scholarship. This is also a lack that this volume seeks to remedy.

In this respect, recent scholarship that focuses on Hobbes the Renaissance humanist has effected an important breakthrough. Hobbes was the author of classical translations and imitations, most notably his translations of Thucydides and Homer, and his own efforts at Latin poetry in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* and his country house poem, *De mirabilibus pecci carmen*. Perhaps for this reason, commentators have tended to go directly to classical sources for the provenance of his views. Due to this prejudice Hobbes's debt to Renaissance transmitters of antique philosophy has often been overlooked, and yet his adoption of symptomatic forms, the diatribe, the hexameter epic, and a certain style of philological and exegetical discourse, point us unmistakably in the direction of Lorenzo Valla, Erasmus, and their Renaissance contemporaries, whose hostility to the Scholastics and impatience with the Aristotelian tradition Hobbes shared. For Hobbes, like most of us, was primarily engaged by contemporary debates, and while positions in these debates were often flagged by the banners of the classical philosophical schools, their immediacy related to preoccupations of the day.

The classical sources transmitted by Renaissance humanists for Hobbes's physics, epistemology and mechanistic psychology have recently been subjected to detailed scrutiny by a number of prominent scholars, including Karl Schuhmann, Gianni Paganini and Cees Leijenhorst. Hobbes is an eclectic thinker, and as Leijenhorst has shown by careful examination of the Aristotelian commentaries, there is no doubt that he was well versed in the scholastic tradition.¹⁴ Evidence for the influence on Hobbes of the late Aristotelians Telesio and Campanella has been carefully documented by Schuhmann and Leijenhorst; while Paganini, by following the paper trail and by brilliant textual exegesis has provided important evidence for the influence of Valla and Gassendi.¹⁵

More systematic Hobbes scholarship produces new resources. So Quentin Skinner's seminal *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*¹⁶ set the scene for detailed studies of the Renaissance context for Hobbes's thought. The Clarendon Hobbes series of critical editions promises a systematic contextualization of Hobbes's entire corpus, and Noel Malcolm's excellent edition of the *Hobbes Correspondence* in this series has been a major turning point. Internal

and external evidence and timing, corroborated in the *Hobbes Correspondence*, are critical. No one has made better use of this resource than Jeffrey Collins in his recent revisionist *Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes*,¹⁷ while Noel Malcolm's collected essays in *Aspects of Hobbes* are a model of Hobbes scholarship, combining perceptive textual exegesis, paleographic analysis, and exhaustive archival research, to cast new light on the tradition of biblical criticism within which Hobbes was working, and the reception of his corpus in the European Republic of Letters.¹⁸

Attempts to recontextualize Hobbes's political philosophy have led to important initiatives in intellectual history in general. See, for instance, the series of conferences of the History of Political and Social Concepts Group, inaugurated by the 1998 conference hosted by the Finnish Institute in London, on the convergence of the historiography of the Cambridge Contextual Historians with the *Begriffsgeschichte* of Reinhart Koselleck, as well as the important debate between Quentin Skinner, Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, and Yves Charles Zarka, Director of the Centre Hobbes at the Sorbonne and general editor of the French critical edition of Hobbes's works published by Vrin.¹⁹ Hobbes hovers at the margins of recent debates over republicanism, as Zarka emphasizes, noting Hobbes's specific contribution to the reinvention of republicanism in his notion of a *public* political will.²⁰ This Cambridge Companion is an unparalleled opportunity to showcase these important departures in Hobbes scholarship and to reexamine the relationship between Hobbes's physics, metaphysics, politics, psychology and religion in a topic by topic sequence of essays that follows the structure of the four parts of Hobbes's *Leviathan*: I, 'Of Man'; II, 'Of Commonwealth'; III, 'Of a Christian Commonwealth'; and IV, 'Of the Kingdom of Darkness'; as well as a concluding section V, on Hobbes's reception.

I

We begin with the Leviathan of the frontispiece, the sea monster from the book of Job. Carl Schmitt made a famous throw-away remark that in Hobbes's day the notion of Leviathan was no longer shocking, but had become a gentleman's joke,²¹ effectively deflating the terrible force of the beast. This is strange, given that Schmitt's *Leviathan*

is the most extreme extension of Hobbesian absolutism. Horst Bredekamp in his exacting analysis of Hobbes's political iconography shows that it is, moreover, implausible. Hobbes's participation in the design of the frontispiece to *Leviathan* suggests that this illustration, like those that preface his *Thucydides*, *De Cive*, and *Philosophical Rudiments*, belonged to an iconographic strategy intended to alert the reader by striking images.²² Bredekamp supports his case with an art historian's analysis of the iconography of representation that ranges from Hermetic works, of enormous Renaissance significance, to the composite Archimboldesque portraits of Hobbes's own day, and the works of his illustrators, adept in *avant garde* techniques of representation. But Hobbes's iconography is also a self-conscious semiotics. As Bredekamp notes: 'The frontispiece of *Leviathan* furnishes the state-giant not only with the memories of the individual as *marks*, but capable also of assuming the character of a general *sign* "by which what one man finds out may be manifested and made known to others".²³ The picture of *Leviathan* completed the step from mark to sign not only as a representation of individual imagination, but also because it forms the sign of the state, with the power to direct action'.

Bredekamp's study of the aesthetics of representation, 'Hobbes's Visual Strategy', is nicely complemented by Quentin Skinner's account of Hobbes's theory of political representation, a view of representative government challenging that of parliamentarians in his day. Skinner addresses the nature of the polemics in which Hobbes was engaged, and his contribution to the refinement of the vocabulary of 'representing', 'representation' and 'representative' government at this critical moment. He is the first systematically to compare Hobbes's views on representation with those of parliamentary writers, intent on countering royal absolutism with classical republican notions of accountability, who debated the question to what degree a representative must 'picture' the polity. For, parliamentary writers, seeing the issue of legitimacy and political obligation primarily in terms of the 'representative will' of the people, saw their task as first to set about giving a satisfactory account of the representation of the 'body' of the people. But, as Skinner points out, the great strength of Hobbes's position is to argue that until the authorization of a sovereign there is no body politic to be represented at all, only a disaggregated multitude. In this way Hobbes effectively

deflated centuries of political theology on the organic nature of the body politic and the fiction of incorporation on which legitimations of popular sovereignty were based. In terms of legitimacy the Cromwellian Commonwealth was not essentially different from the monarchy, and Hobbes was careful to argue that sovereign assemblies were representative in exactly the same way as monarchs, both *post facto*, or after the fact of authorization, as long as they honoured the pact of protection in exchange for obedience.

Johan Tralau, in his essay 'Leviathan and the Riddle of Hobbes's Sovereign Monster', mindful of Bredekamp's thesis, takes up the issue of Hobbes's sovereign monster from a slightly different perspective, claiming Leviathan among the category of powerful hybrids, part man/woman, part beast, familiar to us from classical mythology. Appealing to Machiavelli's famous account of human nature, according to which man is like the centaur, capable of greatness, but also a monster to his fellows – a *topos* introduced by Hobbes no doubt with reference to Machiavelli – Tralau argues the likelihood of Hobbes drawing on this tradition. He dismisses Schmitt's paradoxical thesis (paradoxical given the role of terror in the third Reich) that the terrifying power of the Leviathan monster, is by Hobbes's day defanged, showing rather how seriously Hobbes took the Book of Job and its model, the God of fear. Just as the pagans of old invoked the terrifying hybrids, Medusa and Dionysus, and Hermeticism the speaking statues of ancient Egypt (discussed by Bredekamp and Paganini), Hobbes's hybrid monster too evokes the fear necessary for obeisance to absolute power. So, in the last two books of *Leviathan*, Hobbes shows how, in order to 'regulate this their fear', pagan kings established 'that DEMONOLOGY (in which the poets, as principal priests of the heathen religion, were specially employed or revered) to the public peace, and to the obedience of subjects necessary thereunto'.²⁴ Idols served a political purpose, and so does Leviathan. As sources of fear and awe they appeal to the same psychological vulnerabilities; for fear, and especially fear of death, is the well-spring of religion and superstition in the Deist and Epicurean traditions, to which Hobbes belonged.

The architecture of *Leviathan*, presenting to the reader first an iconographic frontispiece, proceeds in book 1 'Of Man' to a sensationalist psychology in which Hobbes's theory of signs is embedded, and then to a general theory of human nature and motivation. Cees

Leijenhorst, in the tradition of Karl Schuhmann and Gianni Paganini, demonstrates again the coherence of Hobbes's philosophy, in which epistemology is explored in terms of a mechanistic psychology that draws on elaborate Aristotelian theories of perception, but in order to defend an anti-Aristotelian theory of psychological mechanism. One of the most striking aspects of Hobbes's anthropology and psychology is his resort to the thought experiment of the state of nature. In many respects Epicurean, Hobbes draws in fact on a long classical tradition, as Kinch Hoekstra shows, to demonstrate that the ungoverned passions of individuals in the state of nature are an analogue for the state of anarchy to which civil society is too easily returned. It is the saving grace of reason that permits humans to make the rational calculation of long-term enlightened self-interest that alone can save them from this fate, as modern rational choice models, discussed by Kinch Hoekstra, have stressed.

II

Emphasis on the social contract as a mental construct or a thought experiment, investigated by Hoekstra, has long obscured the classical and biblical sources for Hobbes's theory of incorporation and covenant, topics explored by Skinner and Lessay in their essays. For Hobbes's thought experiment is not without context as Hoekstra makes clear. Nor would it have worked in his day without traditional sanctions, in the form of biblical and classical legitimations. Traditional theories of representation and models for covenanting allowed Hobbes the space to explore his own solutions in terms of recognizable paradigms. Hobbes's sensationalist psychology requires him in turn to reevaluate conventional moral theory, the subject of Tom Sorell's essay, a task Hobbes ingeniously melds to his resuscitation of the natural law tradition. His derivation of the laws of nature serves two purposes:²⁵ first, the need to find a psychologically compelling basis for the Christian virtues, or facsimiles of them; second, the need to distinguish basic from nonbasic virtues, as well as giving agreed senses to virtue terms in order to stabilize moral rhetoric – a problem to which Quentin Skinner has been particularly attentive in his *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (1996), and his many essays on the humanist Renaissance Hobbes in his *Visions of Politics* (3 volumes, 2002). Hobbes succeeds in deriving a theory

of the virtues that radically revises virtue theory, a position, Sorell argues, that is compatible with disagreements in human valuations, without necessarily involving him in moral scepticism or relativism.

Gabriella Slomp takes a particular case in the human constellation of virtues and vices, that of glory-seeking, to show that Hobbes's treatment of glory in *Leviathan* and previous works affords insights into some of the continuities and developments of his philosophy of man. Hobbes's treatment of the glory-seeker challenges traditional assumptions about his theory of human nature, namely, that it assumes independent individuals with given aims and desires, that it is 'reductive' and unduly pessimistic. For, in fact, in the tradition of Machiavelli's *grandezza*, or greatness, glory is for Hobbes a source of optimism, offering the opportunity for a programme in civic education, in which good teachers (Hobbes himself) and good books (*Leviathan*), teach people the need for civil obedience and knowledge that might protect them from the rhetoric of glory-seeking demagogues.

If Hobbes's position on glory-seeking is to some extent counterintuitive, the same could be said of his relation to liberalism. Lucien Jaume, taking up the thesis that liberal thought is founded on the distance between citizen and government, or on *the right of judging*, and consequently of criticising the exercise of governmental sovereignty, notes that by placing a centre of resistance and a reservoir of natural right at the core of society, from which the right to resist could be drawn, Hobbes can be said to have inspired liberalism. Both Jaume's essay and that of Dieter Hüning focus on the little explored subject of Hobbes's contribution to Continental European juridical thought. We know from Hobbes's works of the 1660s, especially the *Dialogue Concerning the Common Laws*, written after 1668, and *Behemoth*, written between 1668 and 1670, that he was bitterly opposed to parliamentarians and Common Lawyers because of their failure to treat satisfactorily the problem of sovereignty. Hüning is among the first to examine Hobbes's positive endorsement of, and contribution to, the European civil law tradition, going so far as to argue that Hobbes may even be said to have invented the concept of *Rechtsstaat*. His immense influence on Pufendorf and on the subsequent civil law treatment of 'the right to punish' is a test case for Hüning's thesis. We are left asking ourselves whether Hobbes's diatribe against Edward Coke in the *Dialogue*, and his fulminations

against the Parliamentarians in *Behemoth*, might not represent a more sweeping rejection of the indigenous Common Law tradition than hitherto suspected.

III

Is Hobbes's book 3, 'Of a Christian Commonwealth' a special case of book 2, 'Of Commonwealth', or is it categorically different? Franck Lessay's essay on 'Hobbes's Covenant Theology and Its Political Implications' does for Hobbes's theory of covenant what Quentin Skinner has done for his theory of representation. By careful comparison of Hobbes's covenant theory with the covenant theology of his day, Lessay shows that the similarities are for the most part superficial. One might guess, in fact, that here too Hobbes is mimicking arguments in the public discourse that he intends to discredit by cooptation. To try to answer my question, Hobbes's distinction between the natural and the prophetic kingdoms of God (which book 2, 'Of Commonwealth', and book 3, 'Of a Christian Commonwealth', explore) while at first glance suggesting a chronological sequence, is, on closer examination, analytical. This rules covenant theology out, just because, as Hobbes is at pains to stress, the laws of the natural kingdom can never be overturned under a prophetic dispensation. God's sovereignty over men may be said to take these two different forms, Hobbes concedes, but of God's natural kingdom all rational creatures continue to be members, just because the intelligence that allows them to acknowledge God's existence and omnipotence, and grasp the prescriptions contained in his rational Word, is the same intelligence that leads men to submit to a human authority in this world. This episteme dictates that in the 'natural kingdom of God' there can be no danger of conflict between the obligation to choose between God's commands and those of the civil sovereign. The situation may appear to be different in God's 'prophetic kingdom', where God is sovereign by an explicit pact with a small fraction of men: a covenant concluded at first with Abraham, and later renewed and specified with Isaac, Jacob, Moses and ultimately Christ. But then the Christian Commonwealth would rest on two different covenants, one made directly with God under the Old and New Testaments, and one that is timeless, the pact between sovereign and subject in the institution of civil society. Reason is the guarantor of the second,

but what of the first? This rests on biblical testamentary and the hermeneutics of biblical interpretation, both of which according to *Leviathan* rest in the power of the sovereign. This, and the fact that the sovereign alone is invested by Hobbes with the capacity to contract with God, radically subverts the notion of a proper covenant theology.

Luc Foisneau takes up the issue of a potential conflict between obligation to God and obligation to the sovereign from a little-explored angle, and that is Hobbes's notion of power, whether human or divine, as of its nature irresistible and absolute. In fact, if the Psalms are right and 'God is King', Hobbes maintained, then, 'Whether men will or not, they must be subject always to the Divine Power'.²⁶ As Bishop Bramhall very clearly saw: 'The same privilege which T.H. appropriates here to power absolutely irresistible, a friend of his, in his book *De Cive*, cap. VI, ascribes to power respectively irresistible, or to sovereign magistrates, whose power he makes to be as absolute as a man's power is over himself; not to be limited by any thing, but only by their strength'.²⁷ Power for Hobbes is a kinetic force; it compels movement in a prescribed direction and is irresistible in this sense. Sovereign power, which is immediate and palpable, meets the criteria for power as the exercise of force, but divine power in the prophetic kingdom, which is by definition mediated, and in the last instance a matter of hermeneutics, does not. Indeterminate by its very nature, hermeneutics cannot be enlisted to overturn determinate sovereign power. Rather, for this very reason hermeneutics must once again be annexed to the sovereign domain.

Roberto Farneti examines this problem of potential conflict of jurisdictions under another rubric, the 'time of regeneration' – as Hobbes refers to the 'time between the ascension and the general resurrection'.²⁸ In this time, God having withdrawn from the world, men must obey the laws promulgated by their earthly sovereign. But under this dispensation individuals have a tendency to 'confound Lawes with Right', for they 'continue still to doe what is permitted by divine Right, notwithstanding it be forbidden by the civill Law'.²⁹ Farneti argues that the objective of the third book of *Leviathan* is to dramatize this leave-taking of God, by neutralizing what Carl Schmitt has called the 'Wirkung Christi', namely, the actual and efficient presence of Christ in the *interim* of 'regeneration'.

Hobbes's theological enemies (for whom the Kingdom of Christ had already begun and, in Schmitt's words, 'was a political entity liable to trigger a civil war') strongly supported the idea of the mystical and eucharistic presence of Christ, as Alexander Rosse pointed out, 'even in this world'. John Bramhall, replying to Hobbes, argued that 'if the King commands any thing which is repugnant to the Law of God or Nature, we ought rather *to obey God than men*'. Hobbes's response is that such a disempowerment, or 'desacralization', of the law of nature not only offends against divine design but turns out to be a dangerous shortcut to salvation, explained with reference to Paul's notion not only of the 'weakness' (*asthenés*) but also of the 'uselessness' (*anophelés*) of the law of the Old Covenant as a route to salvation under the dispensation of the new. Hobbes in *Leviathan*, particularly in chapter xliii, applies a consistently Pauline conception of the law to those 'prompts' and 'counsels' that exceed the will of the sovereign, as 'remnants' of an old dispensation, by which the citizens as a 'Chosen People' were promised more direct access to the Kingdom of heaven. In his implicit commentary on Romans 3:21–6 Hobbes takes up the Pauline theme of the weakness of the law and introduces the *topos* of 'faith' as the minimum 'necessary' to salvation which at the same time allows secular sovereign power full scope.

Toleration is for Hobbes, paradoxically, a corollary of the Pauline position, which does not allow 'matters indifferent' to divide the Christian community. Edwin Curley's essay takes up this topic recently addressed by Alan Ryan,³⁰ arguing for a more tolerant Hobbes, and noting the similarity between Hobbes's position on the sovereign's right to control religious expression and that of Spinoza in chapter xix of the *Theological-Political Treatise*. Although Spinoza in that chapter grants the sovereign the right to control what may be said about religious issues, it is a right, he goes on in the next chapter to argue, that sovereigns should be very cautious to exercise. Hobbes's intention may be, like Spinoza, to stress for prudential reasons that state control of religion, although theoretically sanctioned, can nevertheless be taken too far. The issue of religious toleration is often framed as a question of the separation of church and state. But Spinoza advocates subordination of church to state, as does Hobbes. Is Hobbes's a different route to the same goal?

IV

The fourth and final book of *Leviathan* 'Of the Kingdom of Darkness', is also customarily the least treated. Its provocative title plays on the twin kingdoms, earthly and celestial, the latter as it has been realized in Hobbes's depiction, more like a demonic Virgilian underworld. The sleight of hand by which such a dark spirit kingdom can be passed off as heavenly depends on a long, and in Hobbes's view, spurious tradition of Greek metaphysics and its proliferation of abstract entities. This is a field that Gianni Paganini has already made his own in a series of highly regarded essays focusing on the Renaissance tradition of ecclesiastical critique pioneered by Lorenzo Valla, Erasmus and Luther, to which Hobbes also belongs. In his essay on 'Hobbes's Critique of the Doctrine of Essences and Its Sources' Paganini shows how in *Leviathan*, as well as in *De Corpore*, Hobbes rejected the expressions 'abstract substance', and 'separate essence' as examples of 'barbarism'. The chosen term ('barbaries') is itself a key term in the humanist ideological manifesto, announced in the letter of dedication that opens Lorenzo Valla's *Dialectica*. Hobbes's linguistic analysis is strikingly similar to Valla's, which was to see 'essentia' as an illegitimate extension of 'esse', the verb 'to be'. To quote Hobbes: the 'mistake' originated from the fact that '*essentia*' has no more meaning 'than if we should talk ridiculously of the *isness* of a thing that *is*'. Valla's polemic against nouns terminating with *-itas* and in particular against those that connote 'essence', famous from the chapter of his *Disputationes*, entitled 'Inter essentiam et ipsum esse nihil interesse', was specifically taken up by Hobbes and many passages of the Appendix to the 1668 Latin *Leviathan*, and *Leviathan* itself, concern the interrogation and redefinition of these terms, of which, he pointed out, there is no trace either in the Old Testament or in the Hebrew language.

Johann Sommerville's examination of '*Leviathan* and its Anglican Context' focuses also on the distinctiveness of the last two books of *Leviathan*, usually discussed, if they are discussed at all, in terms of whether he was an atheist or a theist, and, if he was a theist (as many claim), whether he was a Christian of a Calvinist or Lutheran stamp. In the *Elements of Law* (finished in 1640) and *De Cive* (completed 1641; printed 1642), Hobbes had already presented his key claims on such matters as the law, right and state of nature, and the necessity

of absolute sovereignty. But those books contained relatively little on church-state relations, and much of what Hobbes did say there was compatible, at least on the surface, with the standard position of high-church Anglicans, with whom Hobbes was still politically aligned. In *Leviathan* Hobbes spent far more ink on church-state relations than in his earlier works. The forty-second chapter, which sets out his central arguments, takes up over an eighth of the entire book. There, Hobbes broke decisively with Anglican thinking, which granted clergy special powers unavailable to the laity, and claimed that those powers were derived from God alone and not from the sovereign. Once again, as Sommerville nicely shows, Hobbes used a characteristic strategy of employing many of the arguments that Anglicans themselves had used against their religious adversaries, in order to undermine the Anglican (as well as Catholic and Presbyterian) case, adjusting them subtly. In key respects, Hobbes's arguments differed from those of most Erastians, though he shared their broad conclusions, and like them stripped the clergy of their power – earning the lasting enmity of the episcopacy.

A. P. Martinich takes up the issue of the three versions of Protestantism influential in England in Hobbes's day, Lutheranism, Calvinism and Arminianism, and his relation to them, arguing that elements of all three versions are incorporated in *Leviathan* on issues such as the nature of free action, grace and miracles, the relation between justice and mercy, the requirements for salvation, the nature of worship and whether Jesus died for all people or only for the elect. Martinich shows how various Protestant positions are also detectable in Hobbes's interpretation of the Bible, arguing, for example, that the Bible does not encourage citizens to rebel. However, this biblical hermeneutics, and notably Hobbes's arguments that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch and that the authors of most of the books of the Old Testament are unknown, was sometimes novel and disturbing to his contemporaries.

George Wright addresses the retrospective glance that Thomas Hobbes casts over his philosophical work in the Appendix he added to the Latin *Leviathan* of 1668, in particular for the light it casts on his theological intentions. If *The Elements of Law* of 1640 represents the *terminus a quo* for his systematic thought, Wright argues, the Latin Appendix should be seen as the *terminus ad quem*. These two fixed points set parameters within which to examine the continuity,

development and change in Hobbes's position. Four points bear particular emphasis. First, it is in the 1668 Appendix that Hobbes finally unequivocally asserts the materiality of God, taking Tertullian as warrant, a position that likely already figured in his rupture with Descartes in 1640, as Hobbes began his French exile. Second, he reiterates the doctrine that the soul, if it is to be distinguished from the body or bodily life, is mortal, an assertion that had appeared in the English *Leviathan* of 1651 though not in *The Elements*. This and the vexed question of the materiality of the soul, likely figured in his contretemps with Descartes. Third, he reiterates his view that care of the soul, *cura animarum*, is a pastoral responsibility of Christian rulers, allowing them to administer the sacraments, adducing a new, if rather forced, defence of his doctrine. Fourth, at the end of the Latin *Leviathan*, Hobbes again employs a distinction that had served him in various forms since at least *The Elements*, namely, the difference between God as person and God as cause. He shows quite clearly that he remained unconvinced by earlier critics, who argued that, in describing God as the cause of all things, Hobbes made God the author of sin. These four points then, the materiality of God, the mortality of the created soul, the sovereign's *cura animarum* and the distinction between divine cause and person, all figure in Hobbes's theological project, whose center piece is the description of the public person as public theologian. Their common ground is a changing understanding of the relation between religious and philosophic discourse that obliges him to treat patristic and scholastic theology and, in so doing, develop and set out the doctrines that brought him under the opprobrium and suspicion that continue to this day.

V

The fifth and final section of this volume concerns Hobbes's reception, a complex issue. John Rogers, in his essay on '*Leviathan* and Hobbes's Contemporaries', notes that Hobbes generated more hostile literature in the mid-seventeenth century than any other thinker. His critics in England were not confined to established defenders of the Christian church, the many parsons and bishops who wrote against him because of what they took to be the antireligious implications of his materialist philosophy and account of human nature, but also included intellectuals among the otherwise progressive founders of

the Royal Society such as Robert Boyle, Ralph Cudworth, Henry More and major political figures such as the Earl of Clarendon. In the royal court Hobbes also had his critics, and the queen herself resented his presence. This notwithstanding, Hobbes had a number of close friends who were clearly his defenders, including members of the Cavendish family who remained unswervingly loyal, his close friend and supporter John Aubrey and eventually Charles II. On the Continent Hobbes was highly regarded within philosophical circles, especially by Mersenne, Gassendi and the *Libertins* in Paris. Rogers examines these relationships, and in particular the general intellectual respect that Hobbes was accorded, reflected in the many efforts to refute his philosophy, as well as the impact of his answers to fundamental questions about the nature of the state and its authority on contemporary thinkers.

Jonathan Parkin again takes up the question of Hobbes's *Rezeptionsgeschichte*, examining the broader reception of *Leviathan*, including the later Latin and English editions in the later seventeenth century, and providing a chronological account of the processes by which Hobbes's most controversial work attracted notoriety and official condemnation. Perhaps surprisingly, *Leviathan* took some time to become notorious. Contrary to traditional interpretations, Hobbes's reputation was not damaged fatally in the 1650s, and he succeeded in reaching many different audiences. His work was read, referred to, plagiarized and adapted throughout the period. Charting the development of Hobbes's public reputation, Parkin sees the official condemnation of Hobbes's work in England being closely related to debates over issues concerning toleration and the established church during the 1660s. Discussion and criticism of Hobbes amounted to more than the pursuit of a discredited atheist and was often a direct contribution to political debate. Such factors controlled the reception of his work in England and on the Continent, contributing to the popular contemporary (and modern perception) of Hobbes as a misanthropic atheist. But, as Noel Malcolm has elsewhere argued, this was a case of negative publicity being as effective as positive.³¹ It is possible to distinguish between the popular condemnation of 'Hobbism' and more discerning, if often surreptitious, adaptations of his ideas, even by his critics.

This final section closes with two case studies in Hobbes's *Rezeptionsgeschichte*: Perez Zagorin, on Hobbes's relation to Edward

Hyde, earl of Clarendon, who wrote one of the most important critiques of *Leviathan* in the seventeenth century; and Jeffrey Collins's examination of the campaign against Hobbes waged by the Presbyterian printers. Clarendon's critique, *A Brief View and Survey of the Dangerous and Pernicious Errors to Church and State in Mr. Hobbes's Book entitled Leviathan*, published in 1676, was the only critique of *Leviathan* by a major English statesman with profound knowledge and experience of English government and law. He wrote it in exile in France as a banished man after his fall from power as the chief minister of Charles II, and it is widely regarded as a penetrating analysis of Hobbes's political ideas. It raises the issue of Clarendon's royalism and the degree to which Hobbes, generally received as a royalist, diverged from it, as well as the wider significance of this divergence of thought between two such prominent men against their seventeenth-century backgrounds.

It is just this issue of Hobbes's royalism that is the focus of Jeffrey Collins's startlingly original revisionist *Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes*, for which his study in this volume of the Presbyterian printers is a test case.³² Collins argues in his book, based on the first systematic examination of archival sources for Hobbes in the Interregnum, that far from being a consistent royalist, Hobbes did in fact flirt with Cromwell and the Independents, to his later mortification, and that his Erastianism made him and the Cromwellians bedfellows for a time. Contemporaries were well-attuned to the targets of Hobbes's polemics, as Collins nicely demonstrates, and in 1652 five printers and booksellers were signatories to the tract *A Beacon Set on Fire*, that listed 23 'Popish and Blasphemous Books' including Hobbes's *Leviathan*, protesting not only the books themselves, but the laxness of the licensing regime that allowed them to be printed.³³ This was the opening shot in a campaign waged by Presbyterians through members of the Stationer's Company, that guild of English booksellers and printers authorized to license books. Collins examines a tight web of Presbyterian connections to which the printers belong, networks whose traces led back to major figures in the Westminster Assembly of Divines of the 1640s such as Edmund Calamy, Thomas Edwards, Daniel Cawdrey, Richard Baxter and John Wallis, Hobbes's Oxford adversary. What is perhaps more surprising is the association of Hobbes with Catholic thinkers, most prominent among the authors whom the Presbyterians proscribed, writers such as the secular priest Thomas White, whose *De Mundo* was the vehicle for

Hobbes's early exposition of his philosophy, and John Austin,³⁴ a priest who makes the first known print reference to *Leviathan*, both of whom foreshadowed the Erastian arguments that made Hobbes so infamous with the Presbyterians and the bishops. Like Hobbes, Collins argues, these moderate Catholics were beginning to look with favour upon Oliver Cromwell as a new Erastian prince who would permit a degree of religious toleration.³⁵

It is not too much to claim, I believe, that this *Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's 'Leviathan'* makes a new departure in Hobbes scholarship. It is the first systematic attempt to bring together both Anglophone and Continental traditions that treat a thinker who had a profound impact on subsequent theory of state and legal systems in both these major branches of the Western political tradition. Readers will perhaps be surprised to learn, for instance, that the European civil code directly incorporated Hobbes's theory of the right to punish. While the case has long been made for Hobbes as a seminal thinker in the development of liberalism, readers may be equally surprised to learn that this very issue was the subject of debate between the antifascist Leo Strauss and the founder of the juridical system of the Third Reich, Carl Schmitt, undoubtedly the most notorious Hobbesian of all time, if also one of the most percipient students of Hobbes's thought.³⁶ One of the strengths of the volume is to connect Hobbes both with the past and future. It is a sad commentary that the textbook Hobbes is still often represented as a comet that blazes in from nowhere, creates a fiery path, and then exits. In the late twentieth century the work of Quentin Skinner, Noel Malcolm, Karl Schuhmann, Gianni Paganini, Cees Leijenhorst and the French Hobbes school has demonstrated the degree to which Hobbes is indebted to the long tradition of European humanist thought. This volume shows that Hobbes's legacy was never lost and that he belongs to a tradition of reflection on political theory and governance that is still living, both in Europe and in the diaspora.

Bringing together twenty-two scholars from ten different countries, with English, German, French, Italian, Dutch and Swedish mother tongues, presented quite a logistical problem. But I thank my contributors for their courtesy and patience as I tortured their English – and they tortured mine – pressing them into uniformities of citation and presentation format, and prodding them to meet deadlines. They will, I hope, all agree that the effort was worth it. I would also like to thank my editors at CUP New York, copyeditor

Sara Black and production editor Holly Johnson, and I owe a special debt to my excellent assistant at the Free University of Bolzano, Dr. Tanja Mayrguendter, who prepared the Index. It is with great sadness that I thank the late Terence Moore, at whose invitation I undertook this project, and whose early death is such a loss. I undertook it in the belief that it should be a European Hobbes, and Terry supported me. The volume is dedicated to his memory, and that of Karl Schuhmann, whose early death has deprived us of a Hobbes scholar of brilliant originality, whose legacy is seen everywhere in this volume.

NOTES

1. The standard nineteenth-century edition of Hobbes's works: *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. Sir William Molesworth (11 vols., referred to as *EW* 1839–45 edn.); and the Latin works, *Thomae Hobbes . . . Opera Philosophica quae Latine scripsit omnia*, ed. Sir William Molesworth (5 vols., referred to as *LW*), have long been considered inadequate. A new critical edition of *Leviathan* based on a reexamination of the three early English editions, as well as the Latin edition of 1668, has recently been published, edited by Karl Schuhmann and G. A. J. Rogers (2 vols., Bristol, Thoemmes Press, 2003). A facing page English/Latin critical edition is also under way, edited by Noel Malcolm, for the Clarendon edition of the complete works of Hobbes. Malcolm's edition of the *Hobbes Correspondence* in this series (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994) is an important resource for Hobbes scholars. The learned edition of *Leviathan* by Edwin Curley (Indianapolis, Hackett, 1994) is the edition to which contributions in this volume are referenced, by chapter (small roman numerals), paragraph, and pagination to the Head edition of 1651 and the Curley volume. Like the excellent French critical edition by François Tricaud, *Léviathan Traité de la matière, de la forme et du pouvoir de la république ecclésiastique et civile* (Paris, Vrin, 1971), Curley cross-references the English to the Latin *Leviathan*. For German translations, see Iring Fetscher's translation of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, parts 1 and 2, *Leviathan [1651], oder Stoff, Form und Gewalt eines kirchlichen und bürgerlichen Staates*, Iring Fetscher, ed. (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1999).
2. See Patricia Springborg's Introduction to the critical edition of Hobbes's '*Historia Ecclesiastica*', by Patricia Springborg, Patricia Stablein and Paul Wilson, a facing page edition with translation, commentary and notes (Paris, Honoré Champion, 2007).

3. See David Berman, 'Deism, Immortality, and the Art of Theological Lying', in J. A. Leo Lemay, ed., *Deism, Masonry and the Enlightenment: Essays Honoring Alfred Owen Aldridge* (Newark, University of Delaware Press, 1987), 61–78; David Berman, 'Disclaimers as Offence Mechanisms in Charles Blount and John Toland', in M. Hunter and D. Wootton, eds., *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992), 255–72. See also E. Curley, "'I durst not write so boldly'", or How to read Hobbes' theological-political Treatise', in E. Giancotti, a cura di, *Hobbes e Spinoza. Scienza e politica* (Napoli, Bibliopolis, 1992), 497–594; Curley's, 'Calvin and Hobbes, or Hobbes as an Orthodox Christian', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 34 (1996): 257–71; and his, 'Reply to Professor Martinich', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 34 (1996): 285–7.
4. See Arrigo Pacchi, *Scritti hobbesiani* (Milan, Franco Angeli, 1998); Gianni Paganini, 'Hobbes, Gassendi and the Tradition of Political Epicureanism', Proceedings of the Arbeitsgespräch, *Epikureismus von Humanismus bis zur Aufklärung: Recht, Politik und Moral*, Leitung Gianni Paganini, Edoardo Tortarolo, November 23–24, 2000, Bibliotheca Augusta, Wolfenbüttel, Germany; and Paganini, 'Hobbes, Gassendi et le *De Cive*', in Miguel Benitez, Antony McKenna, Gianni Paganini and Jean Salem, eds., *Materia Actiosa: Antiquité, Âge Classique, Lumières; Mélanges en 'honneur d'Olivier Bloch* (Paris, Champion, 2000), 183–206.
5. See Gianni Paganini's excellent essay, 'Hobbes, Valla e i problemi filosofici della teologia umanistica: la riforma "dilettica" della Trinità', in L. Simonutti, ed., *Dal necessario al possibile. Determinismo e libertà nel pensiero anglo-olandese del XVII secolo* (Milan, Franco Angeli, 2001), 11–45, which establishes Hobbes's indebtedness to Valla for his use of the concept *persona*, his anti-Aristotelian polemic on substance, and his peculiar theory of the Trinity. See also Paganini, 'Thomas Hobbes e Lorenzo Valla. Critica umanistica e filosofia moderna', *Rinascimento, Rivista dell' Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento*, 2nd series, 39 (1999): 515–68.
6. George Wright, 'Thomas Hobbes: 1668 Appendix to *Leviathan*', *Interpretation*, 18, 3 (1991): 324–413, and his essays 'Hobbes and the Economic Trinity' and 'The Haunting of Thomas Hobbes', in his *Religion, Politics and Thomas Hobbes* (Dordrecht, Springer, 2006). On Hobbes's unorthodox view of the Trinity see also the excellent article by Alexandre Matheron, 'Hobbes, la Trinité et les caprices de la représentation', in Yves Charles Zarka and Jean Bernhardt, eds., *Thomas Hobbes, Philosophie première, théorie de la science et politique*, Actes du Colloque de Paris (Paris, PUF, 1990), 381–90.

7. See A. Martinich, *The Two Gods of Leviathan* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992); and Martinich's response to Curley, 'On the Proper Interpretation of Hobbes's Philosophy', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 34 (1996): 273–83.
8. For the reception of Hobbes in Europe, see Noel Malcolm's excellent 'Hobbes and the European Republic of Letters', in his *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2002), 457–546.
9. See Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996); and the important essays written over three decades, 'Hobbes and the *studia humanitatis*', 'Hobbes's changing conception of civil science', 'Hobbes on rhetoric and the construction of morality', and 'Hobbes on the proper signification of liberty', now collected in Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, vol. 3, *Hobbes and Civil Science* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002). See J. G. A. Pocock's path-breaking essay on Hobbes's theology, 'Time, History and Eschatology in the Thought of Thomas Hobbes', in his *Politics, Language and Time. Essays on Political Thought* (London, Methuen, 1972), 148–201, and Pocock, 'Thomas Hobbes: Atheist or Enthusiast? His Place in a Restoration Debate,' *History of Political Thought*, 11, 4 (1990): 737–49. See Gabriella Slomp, *Thomas Hobbes and the Political Philosophy of Glory* (London, Macmillan, 2000); and Annabel Brett's chapter on Hobbes in her *Liberty, Right and Nature* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997).
10. Carl Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (1938, trans. George Schwab. Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1996). See also the seminal piece by François Tricaud, "'Homo homini Deus", "'Homo homini Lupus": Recherche des Sources des deux formules de Hobbes', in R. Koselleck and R. Schnur, eds., *Hobbes-Forschungen* (Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 1969), 61–70; and Giani Paganini, 'Hobbes, Gassendi e la psicologia del meccanicismo', in Arrigo Pacchi, ed., *Hobbes Oggi, Actes du Colloque de Milan*, 18–21 May 1988 (Milan, Franco Angeli, 1990), 351–446, at 438; a discovery made simultaneously by Olivier Bloch in his 'Gassendi et la théorie politique de Hobbes', in Yves Charles Zarka and Jean Bernhardt, eds., *Thomas Hobbes, Philosophie première, théorie de la science et politique*, Actes du Colloque de Paris (Paris, PUF, 1990), 345. On Hobbes and Schmitt, see Horst Bredekamp, 'From Walter Benjamin to Carl Schmitt, via Thomas Hobbes', in *Critical Inquiry*, 25 (1999): 247–66, and Bredekamp's book, *Thomas Hobbes visuelle Strategien* (Berlin, Akademie, 1999). For a recent critique of Schmitt, see Yves Charles Zarka, *Hobbes et la Pensée Politique Moderne* (Paris, PUF, 1998); *Contre Carl Schmitt* (Paris, PUF, 2003); *Un détail nazi dans la pensée de Carl Schmitt* (Paris, PUF, 2005).

11. See Heinrich Meier, *Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss: The Hidden Dialogue*, trans. J. Harvey Lomax (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1995), and the material included in Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George D. Schwab (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996).
12. See Leo Strauss, 'Die religionskritik des Hobbes', in his *Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd. III, hrsg. v. Heinrich und Wiebke Meier (Weimar/Stuttgart, J. B. Metzler Verlag, 2001), 262–369, translated into French by Corine Pelluchon as, *La critique de la religion chez Hobbes. Une contribution à la compréhension des Lumières (1933–1934)* (Paris, PUF, 2005).
13. See however the important collections brought out to commemorate Hobbes's jubilee, which represent an excellent cross section of Anglophone and Continental scholarship on Hobbes: Luc Foisneau and Tom Sorell, eds., *Leviathan After 350 Years* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2004); Luc Foisneau and George Wright, eds., *New Critical Perspectives on Hobbes's Leviathan Upon the 350th Anniversary of Its Publication* (Milan, Franco Agnelli, 2005); and Dieter Hüning, ed., *Der lange Schatten des Leviathan: Hobbes' politische Philosophie nach 350 Jahren* (Berlin, Duncker & Humblot Verlag, 2005).
14. On Hobbes and the late Aristotelians, see the fine essays by Karl Schuhmann and Cees Leijenhorst, in particular K. Schuhmann, 'Thomas Hobbes und Francesco Patrizi', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 68 (1986): 253–79; 'Hobbes and Telesio', *Hobbes Studies*, 1 (1988): 109–33; 'Zur Entstehung des neuzeitlichen Zeitbegriffs: Telesio, Patrizi, Gassendi', *Philosophia Naturalis*, 25 (1988): 37–64; 'Hobbes and Renaissance Philosophy', in Arrigo Pacchi, ed., *Hobbes Oggi*, Actes du Colloque de Milan, 18–21 May 1988 (Milan, Franco Angeli, 1990), 331–49; 'Hobbes and Aristotle's Politics', in Thomas Hobbes, *Le Ragioni del Moderno tra Teologia e Politica*, G. Borrelli, ed. (Naples, Morano, 1990), 97–127; and 'Le Concept de l'Espace chez Telesio', in R. Sirri and M. Torrini, eds., *Bernardino Telesio e la Cultura Napoletana* (Naples, Guida, 1992), 141–67. See also C. H. Leijenhorst, 'Hobbes and Fracastoro', *Hobbes Studies*, 9 (1996): 98–128; Leijenhorst, 'Hobbes's Theory of Causality and its Aristotelian Background', *The Monist*, 79 (1996): 426–47; Leijenhorst, 'Jesuit Conceptions of *Spatium Imaginarium* and Hobbes's Doctrine of Space', *Early Science and Medicine* 1 (1996): 355–80; Leijenhorst, 'Motion, Monks and Golden Mountains: Campanella and Hobbes on Perception and Cognition', *Bruniana e Campanelliana*, 3 (1997): 93–121; and Leijenhorst, *The Mechanisation of Aristotelianism. The Late Aristotelian Setting of Thomas Hobbes' Natural Philosophy* (Leiden, Brill, 2002).

15. Paganini, 'Hobbes, Gassendi e la psicologia del meccanicismo', in Arrigo Pacchi, ed., *Hobbes Oggi*, Actes du Colloque de Milan, 18–21 May 1988 (Milan, Franco Angeli, 1990), 351–445; and Arrigo Pacchi, 'Hobbes e l'epicureismo', *Rivista Critica di Storia dell Filosofia*, 33 (March 1975): 54–71.
16. Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996).
17. Jeffrey Collins, *The Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2005).
18. See Noel Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes*, especially 'Hobbes, Ezra and the Bible: The History of a Subversive Idea', 383–431, and 'Hobbes and the European Republic of Letters', 457–545, reviewed by Patricia Springborg in 'The Enlightenment of Thomas Hobbes, Review of Noel Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes*', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 12, 3 (2004): 513–34. 'The Duck/Rabbit Hobbes: Review Essay of Jeffrey Collins, *The Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes*', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 14, 4 (2006): 765–71.
19. Yves Charles Zarka and Quentin Skinner. 'Actualité de Hobbes', *Le Débat*, 96 (1997): 108–20; and Zarka and Skinner. 'Deux interprétations de Hobbes', *Le Débat*, 96 (1997): 92–107.
20. Yves Charles Zarka, *Philosophie et politique à l'âge classique* (Paris, PUF, 1998). See also Zarka, *La Décision métaphysique de Hobbes. Conditions de la politique* (Paris, Vrin, 1987); and Yves Charles Zarka and Jean Bernhardt, eds., *Thomas Hobbes Philosophie première, théorie de la science et politique* (Paris, PUF, 1990). Among the dozen or so volumes already published in the Vrin series of Hobbes translations, see Luc Borot's *Behemoth* (Paris, Vrin, 1990, vol. 9); Franck Lessay's *De la Liberté et de la Nécessité*, and *Textes sur l'Hérésie* (Paris, Vrin, 1993, vols. 11.1 and 12.1); Luc Foisneau and F. Perronin's *Les Questions concernant la liberté, la nécessité et le hasard*, eds. (Paris, Vrin, 1999); and Karl Schuhmann's edition of *De Corpore* (Paris, Vrin, 1999). See also Franck Lessay, *Souveraineté et légitimité chez Hobbes* (Paris: PUF, 1988); Luc Foisneau, *Politique, droit et théologie chez Bodin, Grotius et Hobbes* (Paris, Kimé, 1997); and *Hobbes et la toute-puissance de Dieu* (Paris, PUF, 2000).
21. A remark first made by Schmitt in 'Der Staat als Mechanismus bei Hobbes und Descartes', *Archiv für Rechts- und Sozialphilosophie*, 33, 4 (1937): 161–2, and reasserted with some qualification in Schmitt's, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (1938, trans. George Schwab, 1996), 39 note 13.
22. On Hobbes's involvement with the engraved frontispiece, see Maurice Goldsmith, 'Hobbes's Ambiguous Politics', *History of Political*

Thought, 11 (1990): 639–73, and Goldsmith, 'Picturing Hobbes's Politics: the Illustrations to the *Philosophicall Rudiments*', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 44 (1981): 231–7. See also Noel Malcolm, 'The Title Page of *Leviathan* Seen in a Curious Perspective', *The Seventeenth Century*, 13 (1998), 124–55, reprinted in his *Aspects of Hobbes*, 200–33; and Horst Bredekamp, *Thomas Hobbes Visuelle Strategien: Der Leviathan, Urbild des modernen Staates – Werkillustrationen und Porträts* (Berlin, Akademie, 1999). Both Malcolm and Bredekamp published their convergent research almost simultaneously. On the frontispiece illustration to *De Cive* as the imitation of an image illustrating Horace from a Dutch Emblem book, see Maurice Goldsmith, 'Hobbes's Ambiguous Politics', *History of Political Thought*, 11 (1990), 639–73. See also Goldsmith, 'Picturing Hobbes's Politics: the Illustrations to the *Philosophicall Rudiments*', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 44 (1981), 231–7.

23. *DeCo*, 2, 1; trans. *EW*, I, 14.
24. *Lev.*, xlv, 2, 353/437.
25. *EL*, I, 15, 16, 17; *De Cive*, chs. 2, 3, and 4; *Lev.*, xiv, xv.
26. *Lev.*, xxxi, 2, 186/234.
27. 'Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity and Chance', *EW*, 4, 133.
28. *Lev.*, xlii, 7, 270/337.
29. *De Cive*, xiv, 3.
30. Alan Ryan, 'Hobbes, toleration and the inner life', in David Miller and Larry Seidentop, eds., *The Nature of Political Theory* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1983); and Ryan, 'A more tolerant Hobbes', in Susan Mendus, ed., *Justifying Toleration* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988).
31. Noel Malcolm, in 'Hobbes and the European Republic of Letters', distinguishes three important aspects of Hobbes's reception 'orthodox denunciation, radical celebration, and mainstream use'. See *Aspects of Hobbes*, 457–545, especially 535.
32. Jeffrey Collins, *The Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2005).
33. *A Beacon Set on Fire: or the Humble Information of Certain Stations and Citizens of London to the Parliament and Commonwealth of England. Concerning the Vigilancy of Jesuits, Papists, and Apostates . . . to Corrupt the pure Doctrine of the Scriptures . . .* (London, 1652), 3–4, 7–8.
34. *The Christian Moderator; or Persecution for Religion condemned by the Light of Nature, by the Law of God, the Evidence of our Principles, but not by the Practice of our Commissioners for Sequestrations – In Four Parts* (London, 1652, 4to.). Published under the pseudonym of William Birchley, it denies the pope's deposing power.

35. Jeffrey Collins discusses these connections in light of Hobbes's ecclesiology in 'Thomas Hobbes and the Blackloist Conspiracy', *Historical Journal*, 45 (2002): 305–31.
36. See Yves Charles Zarka, *Contre Carl Schmitt* (Paris, PUF, 2003), and *Un détail nazi dans la pensée de Carl Schmitt* (Paris, PUF, 2005).

1 Thomas Hobbes's Visual Strategies

I. PICTURE WARS

The conflicts of the last five years have been waged at least in part as a war of images.¹ From the destruction of the Buddha statues of Bamiyan,² the attack on New York's Twin Towers, the toppling of the statues of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, the videos of torturing and beheadings, to the caricature conflict of early 2006, the phrase 'shock and awe', which rhetorically announced the military campaign in Iraq of 2003, was deeply embedded. While 'shock' is a central concept of the avant-garde aesthetic,³ the term 'awe' is a product of the linguistic power of the antirhetorician Thomas Hobbes. According to a seminal phrase from his *Leviathan*, contracts are constantly in danger of being broken by the contracting parties 'when there is no visible Power to keep them in awe'.⁴ Whether Hobbes would in 2003 have rightly used the term 'awe', or have simply found this a case of usurpation, the fact remains that the present war of images shows that theories that ignore the power of images as hypothesized by Hobbes miss an essential if not a decisive political-historical moment.⁵ But the examples provided by recent history are distinctly different from Hobbes's picture-theory of politics, in seeking to fulfill their mission of awe through destruction. For Hobbes, images achieve their political function not through acts of iconoclasm or image-producing human sacrifice but rather by deterring destruction. Through the 'terror' of their pictorial power, they support those authorities that are in a position to punish destruction.

2. PICTURE PRESSURE

According to Hobbes, pictures lead directly into the zone of psycho-physical activity. He had such an activating understanding of pictures that it was as if each bespoke a particular episode otherwise incomprehensible. Such an understanding could have stemmed from the completely innocuous field of portraiture, as demonstrated in the case of his friend Samuel Sorbière with precise reference to Hobbes. Explaining his request to have a portrait made of his friend in 1645, Sorbière, one of Hobbes's most faithful companions, spoke of the effect of portraiture on the viewer: 'For I am moved and impelled to be virtuous not only by writings but also by the faces of great men; I feel, as it were, an emanation, a natural force which radiates from them to me'.⁶ Sorbière's form of words expresses a central feature of Hobbes's visual theory, which assigns a special power to pictures. 'Vision comes about through the action of a shining or illuminated object, and that action is a local motion caused by a continual pressing of the medium from the object to the eye'.⁷ Vision reacts to pressure created by an object emitting light in pulsating waves that travel through ether. It is a forced action brought about by matter in motion.⁸ Without this appreciation of the force of images, one cannot properly grasp the distinctive quality of Hobbes's political philosophy, which culminates in *Leviathan*. For just as vision reacts to physical pressure, so politics is enacted through pressure exerted in space-time, producing the images that people everywhere encounter, described by Hobbes's extremely comprehensive concept of the political. It is no accident that there has been no philosopher or theorist of state before or since who so emphatically pursued visual strategies as core political theory.

3. THE FRONTISPIECE OF *LEVIATHAN*

The frontispiece of *Leviathan* is therefore not merely an accompaniment to the work, but an essential component. Along with Ambrogio Lorenzetti's frescoes in Sienna City Hall, it constitutes one of the most profound visual renderings of political theory ever produced.⁹ Created in Paris by Parisian engraver Abraham Bosse in collaboration with Hobbes (Pl. 1),¹⁰ the upper half of the frontispiece portrays a landscape of rolling hills, dominated by the figure of a giant



1. Abraham Bosse, 'Leviathan', frontispiece by: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1651

whose torso emerges from the crest of the hills and towers heavenward. In his right hand he bears a sword and in his left a bishop's crozier. The tip of the sword and the head of the crozier extend to the upper border of the picture and obtrude into the phrase 'Non est potestas Super Terram quae Comparetus ei', a verse from the Book of Job (41:24) describing the towering strength of the sea monster Leviathan. The power of the Leviathan figure is characterized by the way that he spans the space, from the tip of his sword piercing the distant heaven, to the staff of his crozier reaching down into the foreground of the city. The composition of the two lower side panels of the frontispiece corresponds to the sword and the bishop's crozier respectively, the left panel consisting of pictures depicting worldly might and the right panel devoted to representations of ecclesiastical power. Reinforced by the matching size of their fields, the panels also correspond horizontally to their opposite numbers: the castle corresponding to the church, the crown to the mitre, the canon to the lightning of excommunication, weapons of war to the weapons of logic, and the martial battlefield to the court of Inquisition as the field of ecclesiastical disputation. As an extension of the sword and bishop's crozier, the respective panels show the extent of the sovereign's secular and sacral spheres.¹¹ The center field dividing them is covered by a curtain after the pattern of the velum that concealed the tabernacle of the Old Testament as an *arcanum*.¹² The side panels together with the veiled center field form a triptych. And while the lower half of the frontispiece is framed by a wooden batten that also subdivides the two side panels, the upper half of the frontispiece depicting the giant has no such border. It could be a panel painting placed above a tripartite *retablo*, but in contrast to the framed panels below it has the feel of an authentic apparition.

Even before reading a line of the text, this triptych of the visionary presence of Leviathan, the title draped like an *Arcanum*, and the active fields captured on the panels, impresses one as challenging the notion that Leviathan can only be portrayed by means of a *more geometrico* representation. Abraham Bosse had developed and propagated the geometric style like no other,¹³ yet a part of the refinement of his frontispiece is that, in the form of a curtain, he paradoxically discloses the value of the obscured. Here is a programmatic work of rare clarity, which explores the possibilities of pictures and their

inexhaustible complexity. The reason that this frontispiece has been often described – yet analyzed relatively late – lies in its capability to address elements of political thought that were bizarre or even offensive to the modern reader.¹⁴ Among these are the critique of Descartes' automaton theory, the use of the hermetic tradition, the reflection of *royal effigies*, the construction of a political iconology of time, and the scientific underpinning of *Leviathan* in optics. The widespread interpretation of *Leviathan* as a linguistic-analyst's rule-book cum-discourse-machine fails to address the very items that contribute to the vital substance of this *magnum opus*.¹⁵

4. THE HERMETIC MACHINE OF REASON

The Introduction to *Leviathan* already provokes the reader with the confusing notion of the state as a living machine with the capacity to think, speak, and act in both a reasonable and forceful manner. This is a far remove from René Descartes' beast-machine theory, to which Hobbes's mechanistic philosophy owes much. If Descartes, in his *Discours de la Méthode*, presented a complex panorama of connections between bodily movement, the nervous system and the human structure of the brain, in order to compare the various functions of sensory perception, social control, memory and imagination with machines, he nevertheless maintained that machines do not possess reflexive language capabilities, and therefore could never possess intellect or reason.¹⁶ Yet Hobbes in the opening paragraph of *Leviathan*, takes up precisely this distinction, likening the body politic as a living machine to humans as the 'rational and most excellent work of Nature'. And insofar as *Leviathan* as 'Commonwealth or State' has the capacity to protect and defend its citizens, it surpasses even human reason.¹⁷

In terms of the traditional understanding of Hobbes's philosophy, the evidence for this anti-Cartesian turn may seem offensive, if not perverse. In his famous seventeenth chapter Hobbes affirms that the creation of this living machine is to be understood as the creation of a 'Mortal God'.¹⁸ The notion 'mortal god' was familiar in his time as the epithet that Giorgio Vasari, for example, bestowed upon outstanding artists such as Raffael.¹⁹ But no text came closer to Hobbes's concept of the reason-endowed, man-created machine than the pseudo-Egyptian revelatory writing, *Asclepius*, the most

famous text in the Codex Hermeticum. The *Asclepius* described the ability of man to be a creator of gods who were able to think and act as peacemakers:

Learn, Asclepius, of the mighty power of men. As the Lord and Father or, that most holy of names, God the creator of heavenly gods, so also is man the creator of gods, who are happy to reside in temples close to men, and not to be illuminated but to illuminate. And he not only moves the gods, but he also shapes them.²⁰

Hobbes must have been electrified when he read this passage where man-created gods were described as animated statues possessing prophetic powers that could ward off evil or apportion joy and sorrow as they saw fit:

I mean statues that have life breathed into them, full of spirit and *pneuma*, that accomplish great and mighty deeds, statues that can read the future and predict it through priests, dreams and many other things, which weaken and heal men, create sadness and joy for every individual according to his merits.²¹

Comparable to Leviathan, in Hobbes's terms, the gods of the Asclepian statue cults claimed to provide protection for the community and to administer justice. If men could be mortal gods, *mutatis mutandis*, these living statues, like Leviathan itself, also possessed human features: 'By resembling the gods, man can never free himself from the memory of his own nature and origin; thus man, as created by the Father and Lord of immortal Gods who resemble him, also designs even his Gods according to his own image'.²²

It is this massive humanoid machine as a living statue, described by *Asclepius*, that Hobbes imagined precisely, and not the sea monster of the Old Testament, as formulated by the Book of Job. And although Hobbes did not quote the text of *Asclepius* regarding the construction of a 'mortal God' word for word, there are innumerable references to the hermetic corpus in other sections of *Leviathan*. In his theory on imagination, he adopted entire passages. Their origin can be traced to the 1593 encyclopedic work, *Nova de Universis Philosophia*, by the Italian philosopher Francesco Patrizi, which contained the complete *Corpus Hermeticum*.²³ This edition also appears in a Cavendish booklist of manuscripts in which some 900 titles, publications in the hermetic tradition, make up more than

half the volumes, the *Corpus Hermeticum* being represented in 10 different editions, only surpassed by the 12 editions of Euclid's *Elements*.²⁴

So it was not only the book of Job, I hypothesize, but the famous and foremost text of occult-hermetic literature, the *Asclepius*, that gave Hobbes his catchword for the introduction of *Leviathan*, with its powerful image of the state as a gigantic, reason-endowed, man-machine. This was Hobbes's response to the Cartesian beast-machine incarnating the mind/body separation. With this innovation Hobbes found himself in good company. Nicolaus Copernicus had secured the central position of the sun by referring to *Asclepius*,²⁵ and later Isaac Newton also referred to the same text in his *Principia*.²⁶ If the image of a modern state emerged as a transformation of the Egyptian state idol, *Asclepius*, then from today's perspective, it signifies perhaps the most surprising turn for the theoretician of state, whose thought processes seem to point us in a diametrically opposite direction. Hobbes does have things to say about statue cults in the Church, the burden of which is that to worship them is a category mistake. Statues are representations, designed as reminders, by which we *honour*, but do not *adore*, the represented.²⁷ One claim however does not at all exclude the other. Hobbes's interest in hermetics, based on *Leviathan*, was aimed at circumventing the *more geometrico* argument with the most powerful and also pictorially most majestic protecting force available to him.²⁸ With this goal, Hobbes availed himself of hermetics to equip his arsenal with a powerful picture.

5. POLITICAL ICONOGRAPHY OF THE TIMES

The term 'mortal God' has overtones of sovereignty released from the grip of particular interests, yet in no way possessing a claim to immortality. The problem of time thus constitutes one of its most precarious elements.²⁹ Given that peace can only be observed as long as the mortal God is actively living, Hobbes's conception of endless war, against which peace has to be constructed, contains the concept of time. His epithet for Leviathan, 'to which we owe . . . our peace and defence',³⁰ involves the problem of time, for the creation of a bodily mortal God takes place in time. As the condition of 'peace' is the product of stable renewal, so the act of picturing or representing – in

contrast to the act of speaking or reading – allows for its preservation in as time-resistant a manner as possible.

This quality of the image was exploited by state effigies, which were created to fill the period of an Interregnum with a quasi-active representation of the state, for which we have many examples.³¹ The collection of royal effigies at Westminster Abbey, dating back to the fourteenth century, provides an optic otherwise only available to the supernatural eye exempted from the constraints of time. Laid out for its purview is the chain of public officers dismembered through time, yet stretching from the past into the future, imaginable as a linked composite figure. We know in fact that Hobbes was especially familiar with the phenomenon of royal and noble effigies. The effigies of Charles and Margaret Cavendish, Duke and Duchess of Newcastle and Hobbes's patrons by a cognate line, are among those on display in Westminster Abbey. And we have evidence to suggest that Hobbes may have participated in the iconographic programme for the tombs of the brothers Henry and William Cavendish at Bolsover. This conjecture is based on comparisons with the frontispiece to Hobbes's translation of Thucydides, where the motifs and disposition of the figures bear a striking similarity. Stylistic features suggest, furthermore, that Hobbes was likely to have been the author of the long Latin eulogy inscribed on the tomb for the two Cavendish brothers, both of whom commanded his special affection as their former tutor.³²

There are striking resonances in *Leviathan* where, addressing the question of the 'Right of Succession', Hobbes speaks as though he had the royal effigies in mind. 'As there was order taken for an artificial man, so there be order also taken for an artificiall eternity of life'.³³ An 'artificial eternity' is reconstructed by Ernst Kantorowicz in the motif of the *Doppeldecker* grave, for where statues of the royal or noble figure dressed in official regalia to represent its institutional function lie in effigy on the top deck, but dressed as a man or woman in a shroud, to represent the mortal being occupy the lower deck. The displacement of the *Doppeldecker* figures, looking out over single monuments,³⁴ created a strikingly physical presence in the collection of royal effigies, so that one could speak of the 'artificiality' of the time concept represented here. The ten effigies, dating back to Edward III, who died 1377, were displayed in wooden showcases, presumably next to their tombs,³⁵ so that taken together they confirmed

the monarchy's immortality during the union of the Tudors and Stuarts in a special way. This ensemble creates a series, by means of which we can understand the 'Right of Succession' to create an 'artificial eternity' conveying the sovereign presence independent of time. The function of the effigies to fill the Interregnum, and thereby avert the ever-present threat of civil war, prompted Hobbes to claim that people without this artificial eternity would 'return into the condition of war in every age'.³⁶ The artificial figure that the state as Leviathan represents bespeaks this artificial immortality, precisely because the sovereign in his physical *persona* was mortal. In the same way that the royal effigies were able to preside over the short period of Interregnum, so Leviathan as an image was able to govern time conceived as endless in the wolfish state of nature.

The identification of the image with the deceased king completed the *effigy* of Henry VII, which was described at the time as an 'image or Representacion of ye late king layd on quissions of gold aparelled in his Riche robes of astate w^t crowne on his hed ball & scepter in his hande'.³⁷ To the extent that these effigies were capable of movement, they provided a model for the vitality of the body politic. The limbs of Pietro Torrigiano's extremely realistic effigy show that they can be moved into different positions and work like a living machine.³⁸ The illusion that the effigies were alive was maintained even a good hundred years later. So the limbs of the *effigy* of James I's son, deceased in 1625, were 'to be moved to sundrie accions first for the Carriage in the Chariot and then for the standinge and for settinge uppe the same in the Abbey'.³⁹ In Shakespeare's plays we find reflections on the royal *effigy* as conveying the presence of the represented, which then took on an even larger than life form with Hobbes. Effigies appear not only in *Richard III*⁴⁰ and in *Hamlet*,⁴¹ but notably in *Macbeth*, in the form of his ancestors, the last of whom holds a mirror in which the entire succession appears like a kind of magic eternity: 'And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass/Which shows me many more; and some I see/That two-fold balls and treble sceptres carry'.⁴²

In Hobbes's direct experience, the example of James I sufficed, whose burial in 1625 reintroduced the movable *effigy*.⁴³ In a breathtaking departure, the court chaplain John Williams in his eulogy likened the heir apparent to the living statue that incarnated his father, so that the 'royal dignity' was conjoined with 'that Statue

which [...] *walk't on foot* this day after the Hearse, [...] *A breathing Statue* of all of his *Vertues*'.⁴⁴ In addition to the textual formulation of *Asclepius*, man-made 'living' statues in the form of royal effigies, intended to govern during the Interregnum, shape a definitive source for Hobbes's Leviathan figure. They provided the model that made it possible to understand Leviathan as a living machine endowed with reason; created not by the mercy of God, but as a human construct. The idea of confronting permanent civil war with a colossal living statue to represent peace as an 'artificial eternity' is one of the most radical consequences of Hobbes's attempt to raise the conflict between the passions of the natural state and the artificiality of reason to the level of a political iconography of time. The frontispiece of Hobbes's *Leviathan* completed this work of art, which set the visual presence of Leviathan over against civil war conceived of as potentially eternal. The feat of the Leviathan image, in producing a political iconography of time in the tradition of royal effigies, had perhaps its most profound impact on Modernist theories of the state and time, influencing, for example, the philosophies of Carl Schmitt and Walter Benjamin on the concept of time and the state of emergency.⁴⁵

6. OPTICS

In the same way that an 'artificial eternity' is embodied in the sum of royal effigies, so Leviathan represents each of his own creators, those who erected him as the guarantor of the social contract but who are then subordinate to him. Only on a closer inspection is it possible to differentiate the over three hundred persons who make up the mass of his body (Pl. 2). Densely packed human beings fill both arms and the entire torso, only dispersing in the area of the neck, in the shadowed zone below the chin. With people forming his body, Leviathan exists in the tradition of Archimboldesque composite images – named for Guiseppe Archimboldo, inventor of those ambiguous composite images beloved of the Baroque, such as a fruit basket that looks like a human face.⁴⁶ But more impressive even than the influences that contributed to Leviathan's iconography, are the optical considerations and experience that went into the composition of his body out of many people.⁴⁷ Therein lies the third, recently discovered, component of Hobbes's influences, which addresses the



2. Body of Leviathan, detail of Pl. 1

core of Leviathan. First, the gaze of the people offers a clue. The eyes of each one, regardless of position, is directed toward the giant's head and returns through his eyes back to the viewer, who seeks to complete a back-figure frog's perspective and, at the same time, is directly addressed by those at eye level with the sovereign. The contradictory character of the body politic being a product of men, who are then subordinate to him, is expressed in the interplay of forms of eye contact between the citizens, Leviathan, and the viewer.⁴⁸

Just how much precision went into planning the direction of the glances, is apparent from Abraham Bosse's frontispiece for the precious parchment manuscript, commissioned by Hobbes for Charles II. It displays many divergences from the printed versions of the frontispiece, the most important of which affects the body of the giant (Pl. 3).⁴⁹ It is formed purely out of heads that look not inward, but outward at the viewer. So, not only the head of Leviathan but also the innumerable heads that constitute his body are directed at the viewer. With their excited, sometimes anxious facial expressions, they seem both active and frightened, and to be playing openly with the ambiguity of their position, on the one hand protected and imprisoned by Leviathan, on the other, guarding and observing him. The glance as instrument of prudent watchfulness is added then to the props of governing, along with representations such as the sword, the crown and the bishop's crozier. In both the manuscript and the printed versions of the frontispiece, the gazes are an authority superior to these cruder instruments of power, and they thus presage the special purpose of the drawing, which was to persuade the king to license Leviathan. In the drawing, the presence of the sovereign is especially effective, as here permanent topicality is specific to him alone, because the protagonists who make up his body are not preoccupied with themselves but rather in warding off his frightful governance as well as seeking his shielding protection.

The different types of glances displayed by the two versions of the frontispiece were developed in a climate of intense visual experiment, which Hobbes experienced in Paris. He assembled for himself a significant collection of optical instruments⁵⁰ that apparently enabled him to write his 'Minute or First Draught of the Optiques' in 1646, which addressed sight as the 'noblest of ye senses'.⁵¹ The perspective glass, which was developed and marketed among others by Jean-Francoise Niçeron in Paris, was an especially significant



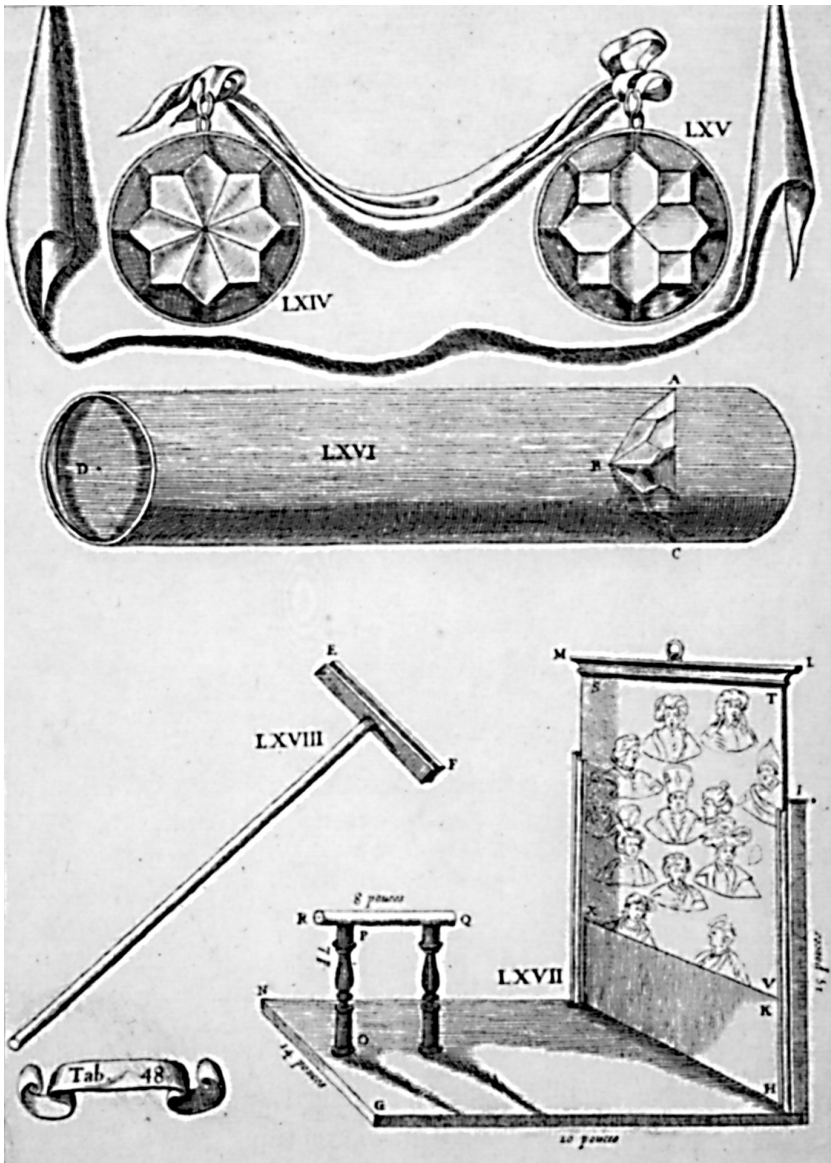
3. Abraham Bosse, frontispiece by: Thomas Hobbes, 'Leviathan', 1651, drawing, British Library, MSS Egerton 1910

instrument.⁵² The tube's multifocal beveled lens was projected from a certain point onto an image of apparently unconnected fragments; the sections then came together to form a new arrangement (Pl. 4). Hobbes apparently saw a witty example in which Ottoman sultans merge together and, from their fragments, reassemble themselves in the form of the young king of France, thus becoming visually subordinate to him. By optically sacrificing a part of themselves, they form their sovereign.⁵³ He continued to be intensely preoccupied by this optical experiment as he worked feverishly on *Leviathan's* composition at the beginning of 1650. In this context, one invaluable source for *Leviathan* is the epic by his poet friend Sir William Davenant, 'Gondibert', which Hobbes compared to the optical technique of the perspective glass. To the extent that the poem developed the *topoi* of civil war and loyalty to a sovereign as fundamental alternatives, it had a similar effect to looking through the perspective glass, according to Hobbes:

I beleeeve [Sir] you have seene a curious kind of perspective, where, he that lookes through a short hollow pipe, upon a picture conteyning diverse figures, sees none of those that are there paynted, but some one person made up of their partes, conveyed to the eye by the artificiall cutting of a glasse.⁵⁴

For Hobbes, the new image formed out of fragments of a different image became an analogy for a higher state of awareness. In the same way that the sense of sight can correct itself through a process of trial and error and refractory instruments,⁵⁵ so the perspective glass, according to him, is able to raise passion-distorted perception to a new level. The unholy, as he implements it in *Leviathan*, concocted by the self-interest of the citizens, cannot be seen through a telescope, but only through the 'prospective glass' that Hobbes equates with 'Moral and Civill Science', 'to see afar off the miseries that hang over them'.⁵⁶ The commentary by the royalist poet Richard Fanshawe on Giovanni Battista Guarini's 'Pastor Fide', written three years earlier, may have served as a literary model for Hobbes. In view of the precarious situation, Fanshawe suggested to Charles II, the British pretender to the throne exiled in Paris whom Hobbes had lectured in mathematics, that he should train his eye by using the perspective glass as a sovereign model of perception:

Your Highnesse may have seen at *Paris* a Picture (it is in the Cabinet of the great *Chancellor* there) so admirably design'd, that, presenting to the common beholders a multitude of little faces (the famous Ancestors of that



4. Composition and configuration of the perspective glass from: Jean-François Niçeron, *La Perspective Curieuse*, 1638

Noble man); at the same time, to him that looks through a *Perspective* (kept there for that purpose) there appears only a single portrait in great of the *Chancellor* himself; the Painter thereby intimating, that in him alone are contracted all the Vertues of all his Progenitors; or perchance by a more subtile Philosophy demonstrating, how the *Body Politick* is composed of many *naturall ones*; and how each of these, intire in it self, and consisting of head, eyes, hands, and the like, is a head, an eye, or a hand in the other: as also that mens *Privates* cannot be preserved, if the *Publick* be destroyed, no more then those little Pictures could remain in being, if the great one were defaced: which great one likewise was first and chiefest in the Painters designe, and that for which all the rest were made.⁵⁷

The closing part of this passage offers, like the hermetic revelation of *Asclepius* and the sensual experience of the *effigy*, a literary and optical source for Leviathan. It is of considerable importance for the understanding of the composition and the objectives of *Leviathan* that Hobbes's central thought, visualized in the frontispiece, should also be the result of an optical experiment. In the picture, Hobbes effects a *legerdemain* so that the experiment and the result present the body's material substance and the symbolic image of the sovereign on a physical and sensory pictorial plane.⁵⁸

7. ILLUSTRATIONS

The frontispiece of *Leviathan* is embedded in Hobbes's complete works, which are largely constructed from images. This layout makes it clear that *Leviathan* is not an exception but rather the culmination of work from the beginning intended to deal with pictures. Already in the preface to his first publication, the translation of Thucydides' 'Eight Bookes of the Peloponnesian Warre', Hobbes explained the value of the charts, maps and pictures provided, and the interplay between writing and image. Since he was not able to find any appropriate examples of historical maps of Greece, he was forced

to draw one (as well as I could) my selfe. . . . And to shew you that I have not played the Mountibanke in it, putting downe exactly some few of the Principall, and the rest at adventure, without care, and without reason, I have ioyned with the Mappe an Index, that pointeth to the Authors which will iustifie me, where I differ from others.⁵⁹

That piece of understatement, 'as well as I could', confirms the pride Hobbes took in his own work (Pl. 5), to which he also added his name



5. Perspective glass and perspective picture from: Jean-Francois Niçeron, *La Perspective Curieuse*, 1638



6. Thomas Cecill of Thomas Hobbes, map of ancient Greece, 1629

in the title: 'The MAPPE of Antient GREECE Expressinge especially the Places mentioned in THUCYDIDES by THO: HOBBS'.

The frontispiece of 'Peloponnesian Warre' is another paradigmatic witness to the marriage of optics and epistemology. As in the case of the map of Greece, Hobbes probably designed this frontispiece also, procuring the services of Thomas Cecill, one of the most famous engravers of his time (Pl. 6).⁶⁰ In the upper three fields of the frontispiece, Sparta and Athens form the antipodes, while in the lower bands, the relevant armed forces of land and sea stand face to face. On the sides of the center panel, which displays the title and portrait of Thucydides, Archidamos, king of Sparta, on the left, is confronted by Pericles, leader of democratic Athens, on the right. In the scene displayed below Archidamos, the king is sitting before a group of noblemen exchanging in the style of a disputation between wise men, without there ever being a doubt about who is sovereign.⁶¹ Pericles,



7. Thomas Cecill, frontispiece of Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 1629

the rhetorician presented in the opposite picture seems to be more strongly emphasized, but as Thucydides explains in his judgment of him, he is a prisoner of the masses, who are agitated and want to be cajoled.⁶² The picture shows the lame and those in rags, to symbolize the way in which demagogues seek support from the weakest part of society, while remaining themselves a source of instability for the docile masses.⁶³

The political alternatives in this frontispiece are in no way one-dimensional in their development. By means of a visualization of the dichotomous forms of sovereignty and representation they show rather Hobbes's desire to grasp the concept of the political in all its complexity. Since the sovereign is developed as a council or body, while democracy seems to function as an individual dependant on the masses, the depiction operates with internal opposites, which are free of a one-dimensional interpretation.

Hobbes also used the expressive power of a frontispiece for *De Cive*, printed in contrast to the signed parchment manuscript⁶⁴ anonymously in 1642 (Pl. 8). Engraved by Parisian Jean Matheus,⁶⁵ it contains three fields that depict the three sections of the book. The upper field of 'Religio' presents the eschatological Christ in the center, who is orchestrating final judgment, with the redemption displayed at the left and damnation at the right. The statue of 'Imperivm', at the left edge of the lower picture band, whose crown embodies legitimacy, the scale of justice, and the sword of state authority, reigns over a peaceful country life displayed in the center that corresponds to a city situated on a hill in the background. Behind the churlish Indian of the lupine natural state of 'Libertas',⁶⁶ two natives are being chased by three archers and a warrior armed with a club, while at the right edge of the picture, two cannibals are dressing the dismembered remains of a young girl. In the background, the palisade-enclosed huts can be seen, behind which a leaping beast of prey symbolizes the animalistic counterpart.

The horizontal picture fields are marked off from one another, yet form a relationship beyond the separating bands. In a descriptive gesture, the state authority points the tip of his sword down to the lower edge of the 'Religio' band. This gesture demonstrates not only that the empire draws its criteria from heaven but that it keeps its

meed ready in the form of an appearance of the blessed transported to heaven. It represents earthly paradise. The statue of the 'Libertas', in comparison, draws an arrow with the tip of the bow directed downwards, as if pointing at the anticipation of torments of final judgment. It embodies hell on earth.

Both earthly states are separated by a curtain bearing the title of the *opus*, as it is presented in *Leviathan*. The arcane text of the book accepts the role of separating good from evil, which Christ occupies in the upper register. The fact that Hobbes had this equation in mind is confirmed by verse 8:15, embroidered under the title, from the Book of Proverbs. It takes up almost as much space as the title of the book itself, and while this occupies the zone of heaven, the proverb arches along with the curve of the curtain into the lower area of the Imperium and Libertas, as if it wants here, like a water shed, to force a decision. 'By me kings reign, and princes decree justice'.⁶⁷ By putting the biblical phrase in the place reserved for the actual name of the author, as his text becomes an oracle that has the power, in accordance with the standard of godly wisdom, to convert chaos into order, crime into justice, and war into peace.⁶⁸ With this frontispiece, Hobbes inimitably managed to characterize peace as the dominium of the 'Imperium' and war as a state of 'Libertas'. When the reader opens the book, he reads the text, flanked by the interior pictures of the statues of Imperium and Libertas, under the precept of a visual conditioning.

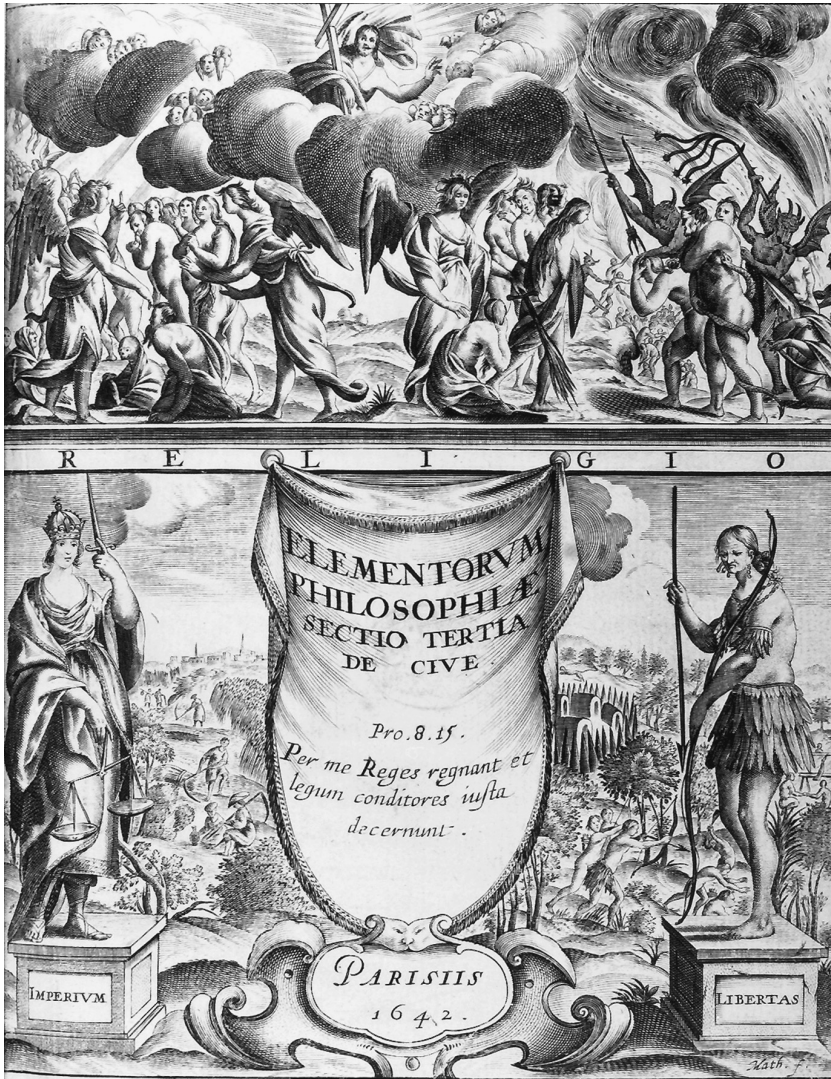
In all further editions of 'De Cive', the frontispiece is varied according to the specific situations in which they were published.⁶⁹ Here as in other publications like the 1651 'Philosophical Rudiments', the pictures gain an autonomous status, as they can lead to or even, under special circumstances, deliberately deceive a text.⁷⁰

8. ART THEORY AND THE ACT OF SEEING

The reason for Hobbes's ever-trusting relationship to pictures lies in his conviction that these can present entities fundamental for all kinds of actions. This is the reason why he placed them in *De Corpore* at the beginning of his theory of memory that leads to systems of behaviour. His point of departure are certain 'moniments'

of remembrance: 'These monuments I call *MARKS*, namely, sensible things taken at pleasure, that, by the sense of them, such thoughts may be recalled to our mind as are like those thoughts for which we took them'.⁷¹ For Hobbes's, the reason lay in the assumption that pictures are Chimera that are loyal to reality at a distance, so that they are first mentally constructed as marks into a form, as they appear to the consciousness. The distance between the object and what is seen results according to deductible rules, so that the cohesiveness of mechanics and mathematics is attributed to the phantasm of sight.⁷² Even this process, of reviewing pictures in the arsenal of memory, of ordering and determining them, makes sight not at all a passive, but a much more active process, whose success is dependant on the degree of its own activity.⁷³

Most of all, the frontispiece of Leviathan can provide the state-giant not only with the memory of the individual as *marks*, but can also assume the character of a general *sign* 'by which what one man finds out may be manifested and made known to others'.⁷⁴ In this general useful sense, the function of the frontispiece is extended from *mark* to *sign*. Entire sequences are connected with it, as for example how impending rain can be imagined and anticipated when looking at an overcast sky. 'The difference, therefore, betwixt marks and signs is this, that we make those for our own use, but these for the use of others'.⁷⁵ The picture of Leviathan completed the step from mark to sign: in no way only as a device of individual fantasy, it forms the sign of the state, which directions the action from within at any given time. Inasmuch as it has become a sign, the frontispiece possesses a character relevant to the action. The people, to return to the beginning, are in constant danger, according to Hobbes, of reverting to the natural state, 'when there is no visible Power to keep them in awe'. All civilized achievements are in contradiction with natural passions, and thus Hobbes needed this power, in line with 'the terror of some power', in order to implement and maintain it.⁷⁶ In relation to Hobbes's visual strategies, it would be worthwhile to examine whether it was the result of the many years he spent in France or the portal of Saint Lazare in Autun (Pl. 8). The tympanon of this Romanesque church, sanctified c. 1130, displays Christ as a giant, who implements his magistracy with the merciless justice of a machine. The text on the lintel states of the message of this picture



8. Jean Matheus and Thomas Hobbes (?), frontispiece of *De Cive*, 1642

world in an apotropaic formula: 'That here the horror terrifies horror, those bonded to earthly error'.⁷⁷ In the condensed form of *TERREAT TERROR* ('So the horror terrifies'), Hobbes would have seen his visual strategy concentrated in the compact form of two words.

NOTES

1. Janzing 2005.
2. Flood 2002, 655.
3. Bohrer 1981.
4. *Lev.*, xvii, 1, 153/106.
5. Bredekamp 2003, 'Marks und Signs'.
6. 'Non solùm enim scripta me mouent & ad virtutem impellunt, afficit quoque me vultus virorum maximorum, a quibus in me veluti effluuium, diffusámqu vim insitam sentio.' (Samuel Sorbière to Thomas Hobbes, 11 July 1645, in Hobbes, *Correspondence*, vol. I, letter 38, 122, trans., 123).
7. 'Visio fit per actionem objecti siue lucidi siue illuminati, estqu illa actio motus localis factus per medij pressionem ab objecto ad oculum continuam.' (Hobbes to Sorbière, 8 January 1657, in Hobbes, *Correspondence*, vol. I, letter 112, 428, trans., 429). For the pressure of vision, see Springborg 1997, 283ff.
8. Jacob and Raylor 1991, 228ff; Strong 1993, 147; Springborg 1997, 287ff.
9. For the Sienna frescoes, see the extensive treatments of Skinner 1986 and Seidel 1999.
10. My ascription (Bredekamp 1999, *Hobbes Visuelle Strategien*, 39–52) is supported by Rogers and Schumann 2003, vol. I, 52ff. See Join-Lambert and Préaud 2004, no. 268, 259ff.
11. Martinich 1992, 365ff.
12. The Book of Exodus 26:31, 33; Eberlein 1982, 83ff.
13. This presented great difficulties for him. See Field 1997, 209ff; Germer 1997, 121ff; Duro 1997, 168ff; McTighe 1998, 6ff, 22.
14. The pioneers in this area were Brown 1978, Corbett and Lightbown 1979 as well as Brandt 1982 and 1987, Bartozzi 1983, Pye 1984, and Münkler 1995.
15. For a comprehensive analysis, see Bredekamp 1999 (*Hobbes Visuelle Strategien*), in the French translation, Bredekamp 2003 (*Stratégies*). For the reception of *Leviathan*, see Bredekamp 2003 (*Hobbes Visuelle Strategien*), 132ff and Gamboni 2005.
16. Descartes 1960, V, 10, 93.
17. *Lev.*, Introduction, 1, ix/3.
18. *Lev.*, xvii, 13, 158/109.
19. Vasari speaks of 'Dei mortali' (1906, vol. 4, 316).
20. 'Et quoniam de cognatione et consortio hominum deorumque nobis indicitur sermo, potestatem hominis, o Asclepi, vimque cognosce. Dominus & pater, uel quod est summum, Deus, vt effector est Deorum coelestium, ita homo effector est Deorum, qui in templis sunt, humana

proximitate coniuncti, et non solum illuminantur, verum etiam illuminant. Nec solum ad Deum proficit, verum etiam confirmat Deos' (Patrizi 1593, 68; see Hermès Trismégiste 1980, vol. II, *Asclepius*, VIII, 23, 325, lines 4–8).

21. 'Statuas animatas, sensu & Spiritu plenas, tanta & talia facientes, statuas, futurorum praescias, easque forte vates omnes somniis, multisque aliis rebus praedicentes, imbecillitatesque hominibus facientes, easque curantes, tristitiamque pro meritis' (Patrizi 1593, 69; see Hermès Trismégiste 1980, vol. II, *Asclepius*, VIII, 24, 326, lines 4–8).
22. 'ita humanitas semper memor naturae et originis suae in illa divinitatis imitatione perseverat, ut, sicuti Pater ac Dominus, ut sui similes essent, Deos fecit aeternos, ita humanitas Deos suos, ex sui vultus similitudine figuraret' (Patrizi 1593, 69r; Hermès Trismégiste 1980, vol. II, *Asclepius*, VIII, 24, 326, lines 4–8).
23. On Patrizi and Hobbes, see Schumann 1985 and 1986; on identifying the edition, see Bredekamp 1999 (*Hobbes Visuelle Strategien*), 70.
24. Chatsworth MS E2, one of two booklists in the Cavendish collection, is not in Hobbes's hand and is also not a catalogue of the Cavendish library, in contrast to Chatsworth MS E1A, which is in Hobbes's own hand and was drawn up in the 1620s to record the contents of the Hardwick Hall Library. Chatsworth MS E2, in fact, corresponds to the Bodleian Library catalogues for this period, the reason being that most of the books it comprises were those Kenelm Digby had inherited from his tutor at Gloucester Hall, Oxford, Thomas Allen (1542–1632), mathematician and practitioner of the occult sciences, which, in consultation with Sir Robert Cotton and Archbishop Laud, Digby deposited in the Bodleian Library (while a further collection of the Arabic MSS was transferred through Laud to St. John's College library, Oxford). MS E2 has been taken by some Hobbes scholars, following Pacchi, who published it, to represent Hobbes's 'ideal library', which might have been the case were it, as Pacchi assumed, in Hobbes's hand. But Noel Malcolm claims that it is rather in the hand of Robert Payne. It is interesting to speculate why Payne might have copied it, presumably at the request of his patron, but it does record an archive to which Hobbes may well have had access, as being in the possession of one of his associates, whom Hobbes knew in Paris. See the *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vols. I (1450–1625) and II (1625–1700) compiled by Dr. Peter Beal (London, 1980), at vol. 2, part 1, 576–86. MS E2 in the Chatsworth is established by Noel Malcolm as in the hand of Robert Payne, in 'Robert Payne, the Hobbes Manuscripts, and the "Short Tract"', in his *Aspects of Hobbes*, 82 n 7 [Springborg note]. Refer to Pacchi 1968; Schuhmann 1990, 337ff.

25. Yates 1964, 154.
26. Dobbs 1986, 137–50, with additional reference to Newton on Hermès Trismegistus.
27. See *Elements of the Law*, EW, 4, 67 and *Lev.*, xlv, §23.
28. See also Johan Tralau's article in this volume, and similarly, Malcolm 2002, 228, on the 'terror' of Hobbes's pictures.
29. Fundamental to the problem of construction of time, see Springborg 2000, 41, 51, 56.
30. See note 16.
31. Harvey and Mortimer 1994.
32. See Parry 1994, 282–3.
33. *Lev.*, xix, 14, 179/124.
34. Kantorowicz 1957.
35. This information comes from a poem on the 'Tombs of Westminster Abbey' (Armitage Robinson 1907, 566).
36. *Lev.*, xix, 14, 179/124.
37. Hope 1907, 539. See Carol and Lindley 1988.
38. Schlosser 1993, 43; Brückner 1966, 96.
39. Hope 1907, 555.
40. Shakespeare 1980, *Richard III*, I, ii, 4–9. See the productions by Windisch 1994, 86ff and 1998, 110–14.
41. Shakespeare 1980, *Hamlet*, I, ii, 199–204; II, ii, 122ff; IV, ii, 29–32. See Wende 1991, 59, 72ff.
42. Shakespeare 1980, *Macbeth*, IV, 1, 119–21. See Kantorowicz 1957, 385.
43. Hope 1907, 557, 558.
44. Williams 1625, 75ff.
45. Bredekamp 1999 ('Benjamin').
46. See Brandt 1982, 204 n 5; Bredekamp 1997.
47. On optics, see Bernhardt 1977; Stroud 1983; Bernhardt 1990; Tuck 1992; Bernhardt 1993; Windisch 1994; Windisch 1997; Giudice 1999; Malet 2001.
48. On the forms of gazes, see Pye 1984.
49. Bredekamp 1999 (*Hobbes Visuelle Strategien*), 36–9.
50. Malcolm 1988, 47ff.
51. Thomas Hobbes, *A Minute or First Draught of the Optiques*, British Library, Harley MS. 3360, introduction, 2v.
52. Niceron 1638, tables 48 and 49. On the history of this instrument and its popularity at European courts as well as to its fundamental significance for *Leviathan*, see Malcolm 1998 (2002, 210ff). For the first analysis of this relationship see Windisch (1997, 129ff); building on this, see Bredekamp 1999 (*Hobbes Visuelle Strategien*), 83–94.
53. Malcolm 2002, 221.

54. Hobbes 1971, 55, lines 380–4. See Hughes 1978, 293; Windisch 1994, 69 and 1997, 129; Springborg 1997, 274ff, 281ff.
55. Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, I, II, 10, 1994 (*Elements*), 26.
56. *Lev.*, xviii, 20, 170/118.
57. Guarini 1647, S.A3vf; see Bredekamp 1999 (*Hobbes Visuelle Strategien*), 91ff.
58. Malcolm 2002, 225ff.
59. Hobbes 1629 (*Eight Bookes of the Peloponnesian Warre*), preface.
60. Hobbes 1629; see Hind 1905, 8–12, at 10. For the question of authorship, see Parry 1994, 283.
61. Thucydides 1991, II, 11, 124ff.
62. Thucydides 1991, II, 65, 161ff.
63. Skinner 1996, 242; in general on Hobbes's view of Thucydides, see Johnson 1993, 152ff.
64. *Elementorum Philosophiae Sectio Tertia De Cive*, Chatsworth, MS Chatsworth, A.3.
65. Hobbes 1642; Schoneveld 1982, 126; Goldsmith 1990, 641ff.
66. Hobbes, *De Cive*, 1, 13 and 8, 1, 1994 (*Menschen*), 84; see *Lev.*, xiii, 11, 112–15.
67. 'Per me Reges regnant et legum conditores iusta decernunt' (Book of Proverbs 8:15).
68. Schoneveld 1982, 126.
69. Hobbes 1642; Schoneveld 1982, 126; Goldsmith 1990, 641ff.
70. Bredekamp 1999 (*Hobbes Visuelle Strategien*), 152–6.
71. *DCo*, 2, 1; Engl. trans., Hobbes 1839–45, vol. I, 14.
72. Malet 2001.
73. Malcolm 2002, 226ff.
74. *DCo*, 2, 1; Engl. trans., Hobbes 1839–45, vol. I, 14.
75. *DCo*, 2, 1; Engl. trans., Hobbes 1839–45, vol. I, 15.
76. *Lev.*, xvii, 2, 153/106
77. Werckmeister 1982; Bredekamp 2003 (*Hobbes Visuelle Strategien*), 160.

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2 Leviathan, the Beast of Myth Medusa, Dionysos, and the Riddle of Hobbes's Sovereign Monster

There is something strange about Hobbes's Leviathan, something vague and indefinite and contradictory. For in *Leviathan*, Hobbes only mentions his title monster three times. Yet these three passages actually give us very divergent images of that enigmatic political beast. We will see that the indefinite character of this monster is revealing, and that the mythological image is thus not merely a superfluous, accidental ornament but serves a theoretical purpose in Hobbes's argument. Moreover, we will see that his use of the image, which contradicts his own principles regarding method in philosophy, is in a sense a theoretical and political necessity for him.

The tensions in Hobbes's statements about Leviathan are apparent. Thus in the introduction, Hobbes professes that 'by art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE (in Latin CIVITAS), which is but an artificial man; though of greater stature and strength than the natural, for whose protection and defence it was intended'.¹ Here Leviathan is the state in its entirety, the organisation created by prehistoric individuals covenanting to obey the new authority. Originally, Leviathan was, of course, a huge beast,

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a crocodile, a whale, a fish, a snake, or a dragon.² But just like the famous frontispiece of the book, Hobbes stresses that this new beast is also a 'Man', a person. So Leviathan is a man and an animal at the same time. However, another interesting quality is ascribed to this curious monster. It is 'Artificiall': it is, as we will see, a machine.

Later, in chapter xvii, Hobbes states that the creation of the state amounts to 'the generation of that great LEVIATHAN, or rather (to speak more reverently) of that *Mortal God* to which we owe, under the *Immortal God*, our peace and defence'.³ Even later Hobbes, before proceeding to the section on the Christian state, sums up some of his toil by stating that he has set forth 'the nature of man, whose Pride and other Passions have compelled him to submit himselfe to government, together with the great power of his governor, whom I compared to *Leviathan*, taking that comparison out of the last two verses of the one and fortieth of *Job*, where God, having set forth the great power of *Leviathan*, calleth him King of the Proud. "*There is nothing*", saith he "*on earth to be compared with him*".⁴ In this passage, Hobbes appears to pursue the notion of Leviathan as the state. But here Hobbes makes a remarkable departure. By saying that Leviathan is the 'Governor' of man, he appears to be identifying Leviathan with the sovereign rather than with the state in its entirety.⁵ So Leviathan is not only a beast, but also a man, a machine, a god, the state as a whole, and the sovereign, that part of the state wielding absolute power.

This strange indeterminacy has to my knowledge never really been adequately explained in previous Hobbes scholarship. And one should not dismiss it by saying that Hobbes might just have been vague in using the image. For Hobbes, as any reader of his biblical exegesis will testify, is obsessed with conceptual clarity and relentless when scorning scholastics and others whom he accuses of lack of precision. When speaking of 'exact definitions', for instance, he professes that 'metaphors, and senseless and ambiguous words, are like *ignes fatui* [a fool's fire], and reasoning upon them is wandering amongst innumerable absurdities'.⁶ So when Hobbes does indeed use a 'metaphor' or image, we should look closely for something interesting in it. Furthermore, notwithstanding the lack of consensus about the identity of the anonymous artist, we know that Hobbes was very much involved in the production of the frontispiece.⁷ The image of Leviathan was important for Hobbes, so important, indeed, that he

names his *magnum opus* for it. One should ask then why he only mentions his beast three times, and in such an ambiguous manner.

To explain the image, as Ross Harrison has recently pointed out, one must emphasise the quotation from Job 41:24 quoted on the frontispiece – *Non est potestas Super Terram quæ Comparetur ei* – in the text – ‘*There is nothing [in the Vulgata thus ‘no power’] on earth, to be compared with him*’.⁸ According to Hobbes, this applies to the state as well: there is no individual that can be compared to it when it comes to power. And that is, of course, the very point of the state. Human anatomy is such that ‘as to the strength of the body, the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination, or by confederacy with others’;⁹ and that is why, in the state of nature, no one is safe, whereas when the state prevails, everybody is subjected to it. In that sense, Leviathan resembles the state in an obvious way. Moreover, the same is true for God. Leviathan is a ‘*Mortall God*’ for the very reason that in Hobbes’s Protestant state, God is supposed to be a matter for the sovereign, who determines religious matters, so that the state shares some of God’s omnipotence.

But this does not explain the remaining ambiguity of the image. We will have to look elsewhere for that. Working on sources from Hobbes’s time, Patricia Springborg has pointed out the blasphemy inherent in the image of the sovereign as a biblical beast. Deciphering the image as a clandestine allusion to the ‘Gallic Hercules’ and the Protestant sovereign Henry IV she shows that Hobbes’s depiction of sovereignty risks comparison with the pagan apotheosis of the prince.¹⁰ This implies, then, that Hobbes blurs the distinction between God and the sovereign, the ‘*Mortall God*’, a polemical move offending Puritans as well as Catholics.

But the question remains: why is Leviathan mentioned only three times, and why is the old beast depicted as a god, a man, a machine, a state and a sovereign? One can, of course, point out that for Hobbes, there is not really a big difference between man and a machine. When mentioning Leviathan in the preface, Hobbes explicitly states that the body is a machine: ‘For what is the *heart*, but a *spring*’.¹¹ As Horst Bredekamp notes, Hobbes, just like Descartes, talks about the human body as a clock.¹² In Hobbes’s philosophy the realms of ‘mechanism’ and ‘organism’ are not really separate at all.¹³ So we can reasonably suspect that a philosophical point is lurking in the image as well, a

kind of pervasive image mirroring Hobbes's mechanist metaphysics. In this vein, Noel Malcolm has claimed that 'the essential point about the "artificiall man" here is that it is artificial, not that it resembles a man – that resemblance is an extra layer of analogy, added in *Leviathan* because of the increased importance in that work of the theory of the "person" of the commonwealth'.¹⁴ But the question remains why a thinker so committed to conceptual precision and so explicitly hostile to ambiguity and metaphor should give us an image with such 'layers of analogy', a virtual conglomerate of divergent images. Even if we can account for all the individual elements in Hobbes's indeterminate monster, we have to ask ourselves why the philosopher of *Leviathan* bundles them all into one strange image.

The purpose of this paper is therefore to suggest yet another way in which we can make sense of Hobbes's monstrous image. Recent research has argued that *Leviathan*, notwithstanding its rather brutal rejection of the classics, constitutes a rehabilitation of rhetoric in Hobbes's work. Earlier – in *De Cive*, for example – he seems to have abandoned rhetoric in favour of geometric demonstration as the model for his civil science. But as Quentin Skinner claims, 'Leviathan reverts to the humanist assumption that, if the truths of reason are to be widely believed, the methods of science will need to be supplanted and empowered by the moving force of eloquence'.¹⁵ Important objections have been made to this thesis and questions raised regarding Hobbes's method and the extent to which pure reason and geometric demonstration are actually the road that Hobbes is taking in *Leviathan*;¹⁶ questions that do not as yet appear to have been given satisfactory answers. In what follows we will see that Hobbes's image of *Leviathan* can perhaps provide us with the most important clue to this enigma.

Exploring the strange image of *Leviathan*, that mythic creature, may reveal to what extent it actually plays a role in Hobbes's overall argument. Image, it turns out, has an important function in Hobbes's sensationalist psychology. For at the very beginning of that encyclopaedia of Hobbesian science that *Leviathan* constitutes, the author claims that 'there is no conception in a man's mind, which hath not at first, totally or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of sense'.¹⁷ So the work of reason is that of working with images – and this explains why 'fancy' and 'imagination' have become so important for the Hobbes of *Leviathan*. For this reason, recent research

on Hobbes has focused on his work on optics, vision and images.¹⁸ Patricia Springborg has persuasively argued that Hobbes's sensationalist psychology assigns a very important political role to the image and the use of it. Here as elsewhere in Hobbes's circles literature and historiography become means of 'political pacification' – they can create the kind of images in the minds of the readers that make them wish to obey the sovereign.¹⁹ Not only does 'fancy' (imagination or image production) have an important epistemic function, but moral motivation also springs from seeing the right kind of images.²⁰

The immense importance of the image for Hobbes is perhaps most evident in a text preceding *Leviathan*, his 'Answer' to the preface to Davenant's *Gondibert*, which was dedicated, in fact, to 'his much honour'd FRIEND MR HOBS'. William Davenant, the poet laureate, emphasises the importance of poetry for morality and politics, arguing that 'Perswasion is the principal instrument which can bring to fashion the brittle and mishapen mettall of the Minde', and furthermore, that 'none are so fit aids to this important work as Poets [...] whose operations are [...] resistlesse, secret, easy and subtle'.²¹ Hobbes, in his 'Answer' to the preface to the poem, printed in the same edition, although objecting to some of Davenant's views, by no means disapproves of what the poet says about the role of 'poesy' – indeed, Springborg has argued that Hobbes's treatment of sensationalist psychology in *Leviathan* may have been prompted by Davenant's politicised poetics.²² Hobbes concurs that poetry is supposed to induce certain patterns of behaviour in people and impede others: indeed, the purposes of political philosophy are continuous with those of poetry properly understood. Philosophy and poetics operate with different methods but to the same ends, and here Hobbes quite ostentatiously declares poetry to have the same function as his *Leviathan*: 'whatsoever distinguisheth the civility of *Europe*, from the Barbarity of the *American* savages, is the workmanship of Fancy', and 'Fancy begets the ornaments of a poem'.²³ According to the principles of sensationalist psychology both philosophy and poetry work by conjuring up images and thereby influencing people's actions, which means that poetry must be ruled by good philosophy. Hobbes's animosity to metaphor seems to be confined to a very specific case: allegorical treatment of the Bible in the scholastic tradition. We should not be surprised then that 'metaphor' and 'ornaments' can still have a function in philosophy. In his 'Answer' to Davenant,

Hobbes comments on what a good poetic image comprises: 'As the sense we have of bodies, consisteth in change and variety of impression, so also does the sense of language in the variety and changeable use of words'.²⁴ These are extraordinary words from a man devoted to rooting out ambiguities and metaphors. Yet immediately thereafter he goes on to speak of the importance of 'far fetch't (but withal, apt, instructive and comly) similitudes'. What Hobbes claims about the image is not in fact very far from Aristotle's understanding of true poetic language, namely that which is neither prosaic ordinary language nor a mere combination of strangely sounding mannerisms (*barbarismos*).²⁵ But the emphasis on the outrageous cues us perhaps to Hobbes's own monstrous image of that great beast *Leviathan*. In the work bearing that name, he distinguishes between different fields in which images are more or less appropriate:

In demonstration, in counsel, and all rigorous search of truth, judgment does all, except sometimes the understanding have need to be opened by some apt similitude; and then there is so much use of fancy. But for metaphors, they are in this case utterly excluded. For seeing they openly profess deceit, to admit them into counsel or reasoning were manifest folly.²⁶

In strictly philosophical contexts, then, there must be no metaphors. There, 'the constant signification of words'²⁷ is to prevail. The question is, however, whether Hobbes is to be trusted here. The distinction between simile and metaphor is hardly profound, although, given that *Leviathan* is intended for a general audience, metaphor could be construed as allegory, which was strictly prohibited under Protestantism. But then again, the ambiguous wording might suggest that Hobbes claims the right to use calculated 'deceit' for the purposes of opening the reader's understanding to the kind of political project expounded in *Leviathan*. Hobbes defines the metaphorical use of words as using them 'in other sense than that they are ordained for, and thereby deceive others';²⁸ evidence for the suggestion that the only real difference between metaphor and an 'apt similitude' is the intention of deceit – which he is personally at pains to disavow. Correspondingly, the definition given of 'image', the 'larger use' of which connotes 'any representation of one thing by another'²⁹ also suggests innocence of deceit.

Echoing the words he had used in the answer to Davenant, Hobbes does in fact say that 'sometimes the understanding' has to be 'opened

by some apt similitude' – and an 'apt similitude' cannot, as he says, be transparent, but has to be ambiguous. His own strange monster is, of course, such an image. Presuming that it is a 'similitude' created for the sake of 'Perswasion' – although it certainly comes closest to allegory – is not too speculative then, and, this being the case, explaining the image is imperative. The question is what hidden thought it is that the image is supposed to 'open' – a question still in search of an answer.

In his enigmatic little book published in 1938, Carl Schmitt notes the riddling character of the image and writes that³⁰

Because of Hobbes' psychological peculiarity, it is possible that behind the image of Leviathan is hidden a deeper, symbolic meaning. Like all the great thinkers of his times, Hobbes had a taste for esoteric cover-ups. He said about himself that now and then he made 'overtures,' but that he revealed his thoughts only in part and that he acted as people do who open a window only for a moment and close it quickly for fear of a storm.³¹

Schmitt adds that there are no such attempts at deciphering Hobbes's image in his own time. Yet whether one adheres to Schmitt's intriguing view of the Hobbesian image as a kind of political *arcanum* or not, one must ask oneself the same question. The kind of contextual reading suggested by Schmitt does not appear to be very far from the one defended by Leo Strauss – indeed, Strauss had written a review of Schmitt's *Der Begriff des Politischen* (a work that fits in with that sort of approach) revealing the hidden normative kernel of Schmitt's thought. And it could be argued that the focus on contextual readings, which after the war became so popular in the Anglo-Saxon world, is foreshadowed by German right-wing academics. Schmitt claims that all concepts in politics and law pertain to a certain 'konkrete Gegensätzlichkeit' in the sense that they all attack a political enemy in their own context.³² In a similar vein, the famous historian Otto Brunner cites another scholar to the effect that a history of political thought that does not situate ideas in their immediate conflictual context is mere 'Literaturgeschichte'.³³ Indeed, the sociologist Carl-Göran Heidegren has recently suggested that already in 1939, in his *Habilitationsschrift* on Hobbes that was not published until 1981, the influential scholar Helmut Schelsky formulated the doctrine of interpretation that was later to be expounded by Quentin Skinner.³⁴

Some scholars have argued that Hobbes is a clandestine atheist and that his work is impregnated with ‘theological lying’ intended to cloak his real views.³⁵ I will argue that Hobbes’s use of images for the sake of persuasion is in the same vein. Schmitt’s claim with regard to Hobbes is in fact twofold. First, he argues that Hobbes’s doctrine is a ‘failure’ as a theory of order: for since it accepts a discrepancy between the citizens’ ‘inner’ and the ‘outer’ faith (i.e., between official allegiance to the teachings which the sovereign and hence the state command, on the one hand, and private faith to which state repression has no access on the other hand); it sows a seed of potential subversion and terror in every individual. Second, Schmitt claims that Hobbes’s riddling image of Leviathan is actually just an indication of ‘English humour’ – that is, that in the end it does not really have any deeper significance.³⁶ We will return to these claims. It is now time to try to open the window mentioned by Schmitt. For there have been few attempts at reviving interest in Leviathan as a ‘metaphor’ since Schmitt’s book.³⁷ Indeed, in a recently revised introduction originally published in 1992, Wolfgang Kersting notes that no one has explained why ‘the champion of methodical thinking and clear conceptuality [Begrifflichkeit]’ uses an exceedingly ambiguous image: ‘The lock of interpretation has not yet been found that could be opened by the key of the Leviathan myth’.³⁸ Discovering the lock and the key is, then, what will be attempted in this chapter.

A. THE MENAGERIE OF INDETERMINATE MYTHOLOGICAL CREATURES

Leviathan is not the only creature of myth exhibiting indeterminate traits. If we turn from biblical sources to look at the Greek mythology with which Hobbes was well acquainted, and to which he is hostile for predictable reasons, we will meet a number of them. Those divinities reported to have changed shapes, like the sea divinity Proteus in the famous scene involving Menelaos masquerading as a seal in the *Odyssey*, or Zeus turning into various shapes in order to seduce or just abuse unwilling women, come in for particular attention.³⁹ Hegel notes that the former kind of metamorphosis takes place only when the particular god intends to do something immoral, thus reverting to what is merely ‘natural’, a property of mere animality, as opposed to ‘geistig’, pertaining to spirit. Perhaps Hegel is suggesting something important here.⁴⁰ There might be reason to believe that

even a divine metamorphosis indicates something irregular, something monstrous. But even more significant than hybrid creatures, or gods or demi-gods changing appearances for purposes of deception, are creatures that are represented as in themselves contradictory.

Hobbes's Leviathan that does not change shape would seem to be among these strange creatures. The qualities that are ascribed to Leviathan seem to contradict one another, and they are qualities that cannot reasonably be presumed to coexist in one being. Since there are such creatures in Greek mythology, we would be well advised to explore the opportunities involved in situating Hobbes's monster among these other curiously indeterminate mythic beings. We may even find surprising connections. Proving the relevance of these very monsters and this kind of understanding of them in greater detail would clearly be beyond the scope of the present paper. Suffice to say that Hobbes, as we said, was well acquainted with them. Now, it should be noted that Hobbes actually does talk of other such mythological creatures of the same somewhat indeterminate type, for instance the centaur. When discussing imagination and images, he describes the phenomenon of '*compounded*' imagination: 'as when from a sight of a man at one time, and of a horse at another, we conceive in our mind a Centaur'.⁴¹ And this is, of course, as Hobbes later points out when speaking of the pagan demons, a mere phantasm.⁴² As we would suspect, Hobbes, at least officially, views this kind of being in a negative light. In the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, an even more indeterminate being, Proteus, characterizes the changing shapes of heresy:

Hæresin, in plures formas quæ vertitur una
Quam quondam Proteus, vincula nulla tenent.⁴³

Yet no chains could hold heresy, which, though it was all one,
kept changing into more forms than Proteus of old.⁴⁴

What importance we attach to Hobbes's image of heresy as a Protean monster will depend on how we understand Hobbes's own view of religion and heresy. It should be recalled that in *Leviathan*, Hobbes states that heresy is a political matter in a very narrow sense (i.e., one decided by the sovereign).⁴⁵ At least on an exoteric level, Hobbes is once again depicting an indeterminate beast in a negative light, as something dangerous, something unbounded. This again shows how extraordinary Hobbes's own use of such a monster as the title image in his *opus magnum* really is. For Leviathan is even more

indeterminate and contradictory than the centaur and Proteus: as we have seen, it is essentially contradictory. And there are other mythic monsters that exhibit such traits.

Medusa is one of those beasts. Her very appearance, of course, is quite extraordinary, exposing traits that are not to be found in one creature, properties that appear to contradict each other. In one of the most important ancient documents on Greek myth, Apollodoros's *Library*, it is said that she and her sisters 'had heads twined about with the scales of dragons, and great tusks like swine's, and brazen hands, and golden wings, by which they flew; and they turned to stone such as beheld them'.⁴⁶ Medusa was terrible to look at, and for this reason Athena put her head on her shield so as to terrify her enemies. But she was, curiously, also so attractive as to beguile Poseidon into mating with her, begetting the giant Chrysaor and the winged horse Pegasos, which came out of her dead body when Perseus decapitated her. More importantly, still according to Apollodoros, some claim 'that the Gorgon [Medusa] was fain to match herself with the goddess even in beauty' (*kai peri kallous êthelêsen hê Gorgô autêi sygkrithênai*).⁴⁷ There is something indeed strange about Medusa's revolting ugliness: she is extremely ugly, yet extremely attractive. Jean-Pierre Vernant and Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux have shown that this goes for her other properties as well. She is, for example, female; yet sometimes she is depicted with male genitals. She is mortal, as opposed to her sisters, the other Gorgons, who cannot die. Thus Medusa transcends categories and distinctions: ugly, yet beautiful; female, yet male; human, yet a beast; young, yet old; mortal, yet intimately related to immortality. Even the terror evoked by the image of the Gorgon meets its opposite in her, for many representations of her are 'risibles, humoristiques, burlesques' ('laughable, humorous, burlesque').⁴⁸ So in a manner resembling Hobbes's Leviathan, Medusa is depicted in a most contradictory, indeterminate fashion. The question is, of course, why.

B. ENTER DIONYSOS: LEVIATHAN, THE SOVEREIGN, AND RADICAL DIFFERENCE

For Vernant, there is an answer to that question. Medusa, the monstrously indeterminate, represents radical difference, complete otherness. Her reality is absolutely different from anything experienced

by ordinary people in their ordinary lives.⁴⁹ And as we will see, this might be true for other creatures with such contradictory traits. Take Dionysos, for instance. There are, of course, many representations of him. Here, we will look at Euripides' tragedy *Bakchai*. The reason for this is not that the play is to be taken as 'representative' of the 'Dionysiac' as such, or of the Dionysos cult, or even of literary representations of the god. For our purposes, it will suffice to explore how the indeterminate nature of the god functions in a work depicting such a mythic creature and, hence, what this kind of indeterminacy represents – for this might just provide us with a clue to understanding that other mythic beast, our early modern Leviathan.

Unlike Medusa, Dionysos is a male god. But as in her case, there is something strange about his sex. In his opening speech, Dionysos, masquerading as a barbarian introducing the new Dionysiac cult in Greece, says that he has assumed a human shape, 'the nature of a man' (*andros physin*, 54). Yet Pentheus, the unrelenting king of Thebes, in his attempt to outlaw the foreign cult and deny Dionysos the status of a god, describes the disconcerting stranger as 'effeminate', or literally having 'the form of a woman' (*thēlymorphon*, 353). So Dionysos's sexual identity is somehow indeterminate. The same goes for his appearance. In the first choral song, his followers say that he is the 'bull-horned god' that Zeus 'crowned with crowns of snakes' (*taurokerōn theon / stephanōsen te drakontōn / stephanois*, 100–2). Later, the bewitched Pentheus chains a bull, believing that the animal is the stranger. Even later, when under the spell of Dionysos, he tells the wine-god that it appears to him that the latter has become a bull (*tetaurōsai*, 922, cf. 618, 920–1, 1159). So it is not clear what Dionysos looks like. In a piece of choral lyric, his followers ask him to 'appear as a bull or as a many-headed snake to see or as a fiery [fire-breathing] lion' (*phanēthi tauros ē polykranos idein / drakōn ē pyriphlegōn / horasthai leōn*, 1017–19). In her commentary, Jeanne Roux points out that the many-headed snake (or dragon) is the Hydra, the monster sporting many heads that was finally killed by Herakles, and the fire-breathing lion is the Chimaira, the mythic mixed being that was part lion, part snake, and part goat.⁵⁰ So Dionysos's own Maenads say that he can appear in many different forms, in shapes that are in themselves 'contradictory' in the sense that they are not found in one and the same natural beast – indeed that appear to contradict each other in a monstrous fashion.

Thus the indeterminate Dionysos may epitomize those mythological beings whose shapes are so bewilderingly indeterminate. In this context, we cannot explore the complex interplay of double images that evolve in the play; suffice it to say that Euripides lets Dionysos turn his enemy into a powerless mirror image of himself, and that it should be noted that the chorus say that Pentheus must be the offspring 'from some lioness or of Libyan Gorgons' (*leainas de tinos hod' ē Gorgonōn / Libyssan*, 990–1). So the enemy of the indeterminate Dionysos may be the child of that most indeterminate of monsters, Medusa. Not only the appearance but also the nature of Dionysos is somehow unknown. When asked what Dionysos looks like, the disguised god says that he was 'whatever he wanted' (*hopoios ēthel'*, 478). Dionysos is, in that sense, unknowable. He is the god 'most terrible', and yet 'mildest' to man (*en telei theos / deinotatos, anthrōpoisi de piōtatos*, 860–1).⁵¹ Man and woman, terrible and lenient, god and monster: Dionysos transcends those categories. Indeed, the unknowable nature of Dionysos is emphasised by recurring phrases such as 'whoever he is' (*'hostis est'*, 769, cf. 220, 247).

In a remarkable analysis using Euripides' play as a point of departure, Jean-Pierre Vernant has shown that Dionysos transgresses all these boundaries and distinctions: he is young, yet old; from far away, yet from nearby – namely, Thebes itself. He is Greek, yet foreign and strange; 'raging' in a Bakchic frenzy, yet 'wise' (*sophos*). He is a 'new' god, yet his followers command his enemies to respect 'old' traditions. Finally, he is savage, yet at the same time civilised.⁵² Most importantly in this context, Vernant claims that the very meaning of his contradictory, indeterminate nature resides in his being a representation of complete difference. In the human world and in the world of Olympian gods, Dionysos is the other and his status as the radically different, the complete other, is shown by the indeterminate nature and the contradictory properties ascribed to him. Where this 'Other' reigns, then, 'toutes les oppositions... fusionnent' ('all opposites fuse').⁵³ Seeing Dionysos implies experiencing what is absolutely other, what is 'étranger à nos normes' ('foreign to our norms').⁵⁴ The reality represented by the indeterminate and contradictory Dionysos is incommensurable with human morality and human standards.

If this tentative interpretation of those indefinite mythic monsters is correct, the question remains: why does Hobbes create a sovereign monster related to that mythological tradition? Hobbes was no post-modernist, so we cannot *a priori* expect him to substitute vague talk of – or images of – ‘otherness’ and the ‘Other’ for claims to real insights. This implies that if the interpretation developed in this paper is to make sense, we have to be able to discern a pattern, a way of making sense of this representation of radical difference within Hobbes’s own doctrine.⁵⁵ How could Leviathan represent complete ‘otherness’?

Let us recall that Leviathan, the state, has two moments: the multitude of people forming the state by authorising the sovereign, and the sovereign who is thereby authorised to wield absolute power. And there is indeed one theoretical assumption in Hobbes’s doctrine that does stress a kind of radical difference, of absolute otherness. The state is instituted when individuals covenant with each other, renouncing their primordial right to ‘every thing, even to one another’s body’.⁵⁶ It is this contract between individuals that first constitutes the state. But in order to forestall temptations to backsliding on their promises of obedience to the law (i.e., in order to rule out claims to justified resistance against the sovereign), Hobbes proclaims that the sovereign is not part of the contract: ‘because the right of bearing the person of them all is given to him they make sovereign by covenant only of one to another, and not of him to any of them, there can happen no breach of covenant on the part of the sovereign’.⁵⁷ Hobbes is convinced that resistance to the authority of the state was inherently destructive and dangerous. Hence in accordance with his own very modern, potentially very destructive view that ‘no man is obliged by a covenant whereof he is not author’,⁵⁸ he has to argue that in effect the sovereign is no part of such a covenant. So the sovereign himself cannot be held responsible to any contractual obligations, for he simply does not belong to the group of people that have created this mutual obligation. The sovereign is thus in a curious way at the same time inside and outside the state. In this respect, then, Leviathan, the sovereign, is different from ordinary citizens: he is radically ‘other’. The norms pertaining to his subjects do not pertain to him. This case is the most radical political difference that there can be: the two parts of Leviathan are

positively incommensurable in that one of them cannot even question the other since the other is not bound to the laws governing the entity. And this corresponds perfectly to the image of Leviathan on the frontispiece. Horst Bredekamp, who claims that the point of the image is that it becomes a 'sign', which regulates and inspires action, has stressed the importance of the fact that the subjects constituting the body are all facing the crowned head. Thus they all look at the sovereign, whereas he does not look at them, but faces the presumptive reader of the book.⁵⁹ There is nothing mutual about the relation between the sovereign and the subjects who make up the state: they are incommensurable. Unlike the final frontispiece, the original drawing exhibited a body of heads facing the reader. At least for some interpretative perspectives, this argument is probably only relevant if the change, as cautiously argued by Noel Malcolm, brings us further away from 'Hobbes's original iconographical intentions'. But we will probably never know if it did.⁶⁰

If *Leviathan* is read as such a mythological monster, then, we see that the apparently enigmatic image of the monster that is at the same time a god, a machine, a man, a state and a sovereign actually serves to show the most important theoretical assumption in Hobbes's construction of political obligation. If such indeterminate, contradictory mythic creatures represent absolute otherness, then this early modern Leviathan represents the absolute otherness and hence absolute authority of the sovereign, and there is an astounding analogy between the image of the monster as radically 'different' and that of the sovereign.⁶¹

We have also seen that there is a reason why Hobbes would want to conjure up an image of the state and the sovereign as a terrifying, indeterminate mythological creature: the sovereign is supposed to be different, he is supposed to be other, and he is supposed to be a source of fear. For the subjects to accept the *potestas absoluta* of the sovereign requires that they regard him with terror, as indeed is the case of Medusa and Dionysos. Hobbes's monster state and monster sovereign end up in unorthodox company: among the demons, gods and idols of the heathen. Several times, Hobbes quotes Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 8:4: 'an idol is nothing'.⁶² Yet idols and idolatry prove most potent politically, and in the still all too neglected latter parts of *Leviathan*, Hobbes argues just this case, although without mentioning its relevance for his own notion of political obligation.

In order to 'regulate this their fear', he claims, the pagan kings established 'that DEMONOLOGY (in which the poets, as principal priests of the heathen religion, were specially employed or revered) to the public peace, and to the obedience of subjects necessary thereunto'.⁶³ The idols served a political purpose, and so will Leviathan. The pagan demons and gods did not, of course, exist except as phantasms in the heads of frightened people. Yet the heathen treated them as if they 'were not inhabitants of their own brain'⁶⁴ – but, rather, objectively existing beings justly provoking awe and fear.

And this is exactly what Hobbes does. His project is also based on fear. For the all-encompassing account of political obligation expounded in *Leviathan* is designed to develop the imperative of absolute obedience out of the pervasive fear common to all people, namely, the fear of death. The logic of the fundamental exchange of obedience for protection that the social contract embodies is enshrined in what Hobbes refers to as 'Naturall Lawes'. And this exchange requires that every rational individual adhere to Hobbes's imperative, not for reasons of high-minded altruism, but precisely out of self-interest. The arguments in *Leviathan* are no hopelessly relativist attempt at keeping the consequences of relativism at bay, but rather the project of a rational reconstruction of what every human being should think. For the Hobbes of the earlier works, this logic alone should suffice. But in *Leviathan* geometric demonstration is supplemented by myth, imagery and illusion as a model for political philosophy. This is not to say that Hobbes does not trust his own argument, although it indubitably has flaws – one has to ask oneself whether Hobbes really does manage to reconcile the sovereign's right to punish and the subject's right to resist capital punishment and torture, for instance; or if the presumption of consent to authority hypothesized by Hobbes is not in fact merely stipulative in the case, for instance, of children or of peoples defeated in war.⁶⁵ But the function of the monstrous image of Leviathan is not designed to disguise such problems, for Hobbes most certainly considers his justification of political authority flawless. Yet as we know, rational justification is one thing, and creating motives and dispositions is another. Inner peace requires that the sovereign have such 'power and strength [...] that by terror thereof he is enabled to conform the wills of them all'.⁶⁶ We may suspect that obedience to the state would not be secured if people in general were to regard this rational

reconstruction as Hobbes himself regards it: a *construction* of political morality, albeit a nonarbitrary construction. For were they to do so, they might consider it a mere 'Inhabitant of their own brain', and even be tempted to substitute another inhabitant for the doctrine that Hobbes wishes to bind them with. And that is why Hobbes has to revert to something external in order to make subjects accept this absolute obligation to obey. He needs myth, illusion, and deception. Leviathan, the state, the sovereign, must induce fear and awe in the subjects; it has to be considered something terrifying and radically different along the lines of Job's great Jehovah. If the image of Leviathan contradicts Hobbes's explicitly professed animosity to 'metaphor', at the same time it serves as an exemplum of the most important premise in his theory of obligation and authority. The bewilderingly indeterminate beast Leviathan is designed to supply an essential 'ornament' to strict logical demonstration; it is supposed to supplement the rational account of sovereignty with an image conducive to the kind of fear and awe necessary for absolute obedience to prevail.

It could be argued that if Carl Schmitt is right in claiming that in 1651, the image of Leviathan had already lost its terrifyingly demonic qualities and become something of a joke, then Hobbes's use of Leviathan is merely an expression of his sense of humour, and my interpretation of the otherness of his sovereign monster cannot be correct.⁶⁷ But a few objections can be made to Schmitt's thesis. First, although perhaps least importantly, his argument has not played a significant role in later research. Second, given the importance that Hobbesian science necessarily attaches to images, the image of Leviathan has to make some kind of sense within Hobbes's own project. It is difficult to see how Leviathan could serve any kind of purpose as a mere joke – indeed, according to Hobbes's doctrine of images it may not even be possible to conceive of it as a mere joke. Third, even if it could be shown that Schmitt is right in claiming that Leviathan was no longer demonic in Hobbes's days, it has not been conclusively shown that his Leviathan is something that we could call a joke. For to Hobbes, the comical is intertwined with power, and according to the theory of laughter that he adheres to, the one who laughs does so because he feels superior to the one that he laughs at – and this justifies fear on the part of the inferior.⁶⁸ In short, accepting Schmitt's thesis would make the supposedly comical element in the image a riddle inside a riddle. Indeed, it would be tempting to look

for a hidden message in Schmitt's own strange interpretation. In contradistinction to Schmitt's view, then, the interpretation of Hobbes's monster that has been expounded here would seem to make sense of the imagery that Hobbes uses in contradiction to his own principles. For given the understanding of indeterminate mythic creatures as radically 'different', Hobbes's sovereign monster represents the 'otherness' and hence absolute power of the sovereign.

This suggests a Hobbes who lies about his method for the sake of persuasion and uses the very kind of seductive imagery and metaphor of which he hopes to deprive his competitors in the name of analytical rigour. The author of *Leviathan* thus sets two different kinds of intellectual pleasure in motion: he manages to create an intriguing and terrifying image of radical difference while at the same time maintaining the persuasive and impressive claim to be operating with pure logic. Hobbes could not have stated the need for myth and deceptive images clearer than this. If he had done so, what had to be kept secret would no longer have been a secret.

NOTES

1. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Indianapolis, Hackett, 1994), Introduction, I, 1–3.
2. Job 40–41, Isaiah. 27:1. See also Cornelia Catlin Coulter, 'The "Great Fish" in Ancient and Medieval Story', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, vol. 57, 1926, 32–50.
3. *Lev.*, xvii, 13, 87/109.
4. *Lev.*, xxviii, 27, 166ff/210.
5. Carl Schmitt, *Der Leviathan in der Staatslehre des Thomas Hobbes. Sinn und Fehlschlag eines politischen Symbols* (Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta, 1995), 32; Patricia Springborg, 'Hobbes's biblical beasts. Leviathan and Behemoth', *Political Theory*, vol. 23, no. 2, May 1995, 353–75, here 355.
6. *Lev.*, v, 20, 22/26.
7. See Horst Bredekamp, *Thomas Hobbes Visuelle Strategien. Der Leviathan: Das Urbild des modernen Staates. Werkillustrationen und Portraits* (Berlin, Akademie, 1999), 52ff, who claims that Abraham Bosse produced the frontispiece; Noel Malcolm, 'The title page of Leviathan, seen in a curious perspective', *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002), 200–29.
8. Ross Harrison, *Hobbes, Locke, and Confusion's Masterpiece* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), 44ff; *Lev.*, xxviii, 27, 166f/210.
9. *Lev.*, xiii, 1, 60/74.

10. Springborg, 'Hobbes's biblical beasts', 366ff.
11. *Lev.*, Introduction, I, 1–3.
12. Bredekamp, *Thomas Hobbes Visuelle Strategien*, 59.
13. Schmitt, *Der Leviathan*, 61: 'Erst mit dem Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts ist die scharfe Unterscheidung von "Organismus" und "Mechanismus" durchgedrungen'.
14. Noel Malcolm, 'Hobbes's science of politics and his theory of science', *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002), 146–55, here 150ff.
15. Quentin Skinner, 'Hobbes's changing conception of civil science', *Visions of Politics*, III, *Hobbes and Civil Science* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), 66–86, here 80.
16. Refer to Karl Schuhmann's review of Skinner's *Reason and Rhetoric*, 'Skinner's Hobbes', *British Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1998, 115–25.
17. *Lev.*, i, 2, 3/6.
18. See, for instance, Jean Bernhardt, 'L'œuvre de Hobbes en optique et en théorie de la vision', in Andrea Napoli (ed.), *Hobbes oggi* (Milan, Franco Angeli, 1990), 245–68.
19. Patricia Springborg, 'Hobbes and historiography: Why the future, he says, does not exist', in G. A. J. Rogers and Tom Sorrell (eds.), *Hobbes and History* (London, Routledge, 2000), 44–72, here 58.
20. Is it a mere coincidence, then, that Hobbes, quoting Plutarch in his introduction to his translation of Thukydides, says in praise of the latter that he 'maketh his auditor a spectator'? Hobbes, 'To the readers', in Thukydides, *The Peloponnesian War. The Complete Hobbes Translation* (Chicago & London, Chicago University Press, 1989), xxi–xxiv, here xxii.
21. William Davenant, *Gondibert. An Heroick Poem* (London, John Holden, 1651), 55 (facsimile edition: London, Menston, 1970).
22. Patricia Springborg, 'Leviathan, mythic history, and national historiography', in Donald R. Kelley and David Harris Sacks (eds.), *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain. History, Rhetoric, and Fiction, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press/Woodrow Wilson Press, 1997), 267–97, here 283.
23. 'The answer of mr Hobbes to Sr Will. Davenant's preface before Gondibert', in Davenant, *Gondibert*, 71–88, here 78, 79, see 75.
24. 'The answer of mr Hobbes to Sr Will. Davenant's preface before Gondibert', 85.
25. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1458a.
26. *Lev.*, viii, 8, 34/39.
27. *Lev.*, xxxiv, I, 207/261.

28. *Lev.*, iv, 4, 13/17.
29. *Lev.*, xlv, 17, 359/444.
30. Schmitt, *Der Leviathan*, 43ff: 'Bei der psychologischen Eigenart von Hobbes ist es schließlich noch möglich, daß sich hinter dem Bild eine tiefere, geheimnisvolle Bedeutung verbirgt. Hobbes hatte, wie alle großen Denker seiner Zeit, Sinn für esoterische Verhüllungen. Er hatte von sich gesagt, daß er mitunter "Ouvertüren" mache, seine wirklichen Gedanken aber nur zur Hälfte enthülle, und daß er so handle wie Leute, die für einen Augenblick ein Fenster öffnen, um es aus Furcht vor dem Sturm rasch wieder zu schließen.' Herfried Münkler notes that Schmitt is one of the few who have understood that this is actually a problem; *Thomas Hobbes* (Frankfurt/Main & New York, Campus, 2001), 44.
31. Translation by George Schwab and Erna Hilfstein, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (Westport, Connecticut & London, Greenwood Press, 1996), 26.
32. Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen* (Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 1991), 31, first published in 1932.
33. See *Land und Herrschaft. Grundfragen der territorialen Verfassungsgeschichte Österreichs im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984), 3, first edition in 1939.
34. See Carl-Göran Heidegren, *Antropologi, samhällsteori och politik. Radikalkonservatism och kritisk teori. Gehlen – Schelsky – Habermas – Honneth – Joas* (Gothenburg, Daidalos, 2002), 29; and Helmut Schelsky, *Thomas Hobbes. Eine politische Lehre* (Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 1981).
35. Edwin Curley, 'Calvin and Hobbes, or, Hobbes as an orthodox Christian', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 34, no. 2, April 1996, 257–71; see, however, the reply by A. Martinich, 'On the proper interpretation of Hobbes's philosophy' in the same issue of the journal, 273–83; see also David Berman, 'Disclaimers as offence mechanisms in Charles Blount and John Toland', in Michael Hunter and David Wootton (eds.), *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992), 255–72, and Patricia Springborg, 'Hobbes and Epicurean religion', in Gianni Paganini and Edoardo Tortarolo (eds.), *Der Garten und die Moderne: Epikureische Moral und Politik vom Humanismus bis zur Aufklärung* (Stuttgart–Bad Cannstatt, Frommann-Holzboog, 2004), 161–214.
36. Schmitt, *Der Leviathan*, 39ff.
37. Examples of such vague attempts are Charles Tarlton, 'Levitating Leviathan: Glosses on a theme in Hobbes', *Ethics*, vol. 88, no. 1, Oct. 1977, 1–19, and George Shulman, 'Metaphor and Modernization in the

- Political Thought of Thomas Hobbes', *Political Theory*, vol. 17, no. 3, Aug. 1989, 392–416.
38. 'Der Verfechter methodischen Denkens und klarer Begrifflichkeit [...] Das Interpretationsschloß ist noch nicht gefunden, das sich durch den Schlüssel des Leviathan-Mythos öffnen ließe'. Wolfgang Kersting, *Thomas Hobbes zur Einführung* (Hamburg, Junius, 2002), 41ff.
 39. *Odyssey*, 4: 455, and, for instance, Apollodoros, *Library* III.i.1.
 40. See G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, II, in *Werke*, XIV (Frankfurt/Main, Suhrkamp, 1999), 44; likewise *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Kunst* (Hamburg, Meiner, 2003), 163.
 41. *Lev.*, ii, 4, 5/9.
 42. *Lev.*, xlv, 14–17, 358ff/444ff.
 43. Thomas Hobbes, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, in Sir William Molesworth (ed.), *Opera*, V (London, Longman, Brown, Green & Longman, 1845), 1061–2.
 44. Patricia Springborg, Patricia Stablein, and Paul Wilson (eds.), *Thomas Hobbes's Historia Ecclesiastica, a Critical Edition* (Paris, Honoré Champion, forthcoming).
 45. *Lev.*, xlii, 130, 317ff/395.
 46. Apollodoros, II.iv. 2; translation by J. G. Frazer in the Loeb edition.
 47. Apollodoros, II.iv. 3–4.
 48. Jean-Pierre Vernant and Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux, 'Figures du masque en Grèce ancienne', in Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet (eds.), *Mythe et tragédie en Grèce ancienne*, II (Paris, La Découverte, 2001), 25–43, at 30.
 49. Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux, 'Figures du masque en Grèce ancienne', 29, 31ff.
 50. Thus, Dionysos is 'le plus protéiforme des dieux olympiens'; see Jeanne Roux (ed.), *Les Bacchantes*, II (Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1972), *ad loc.*, 555.
 51. With Dodds, this author believes that the two superlatives both relate to *anthrōpoi* ('humans'). Still, the question remains how the enigmatic and possibly corrupt *en telei* is to be interpreted and translated. See E. R. Dodds (ed.), *Bacchae* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1960), *ad loc.*, 181ff.
 52. Jean-Pierre Vernant, 'Le Dionysos masqué des Bacchantes d'Euripide', in Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Mythe et tragédie en Grèce ancienne*, II (Paris, La Découverte, 2001), 237–70, here 256; but see also Marcel Detienne, *Dionysos à ciel ouvert* (Paris, Hachette, 1998), 18ff, 38, and Marcello Massenzio, 'Cultura e crisi permanente: la "xenia" dionisiaca', *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni*, vol. 40, no. 1–2 (1969), 27–113, here 60ff.

53. Vernant, 'Le Dionysos masqué', 255.
54. Vernant, 'Le Dionysos masqué', 269.
55. Of course, in a situation where so many scholars are busy talking about the invisible and repressed Other, one should be cautious about claims to originality regarding interpretations involving 'otherness'. For only one thing is worse than academic fashion as such, and that is academic fashion that is not even fashionable any more, but just tedious.
56. *Lev.*, xiv, 4, 64/80.
57. *Lev.*, xviii, 4, 89/111.
58. *Lev.*, xvi, 6, 81/102.
59. Bredekamp, *Thomas Hobbes Visuelle Strategien*, 16.
60. See Malcolm, 'The title page of Leviathan, seen in a curious perspective', 200.
61. It could be objected that it is not clear if the kind of understanding of indeterminate mythological creatures outlined here is at all relevant in this context (i.e., in Hobbes). In order to strengthen the reading suggested in this paper, one would then have to show that this understanding of such indeterminacy somehow plays a rôle either in Hobbes's epoch or, preferably, in his own work. This is, however, beyond the scope of this chapter, for it would most certainly require extensive work on Hobbes's own poetry, the early *De mirabilibus pecci* and the late *Historia ecclesiastica*.
62. *Lev.*, xvi, 11, 82/103; xlv, 10, 356/442; see also xxxiv, 3, 208/262.
63. *Lev.*, xlv, 2, 353/437.
64. *Lev.*, xlv, 2, 352/436.
65. For the former, see Yves Charles Zarka, 'Droit de résistance et droit pénal chez Hobbes', in Andrea Napoli (ed.), *Hobbes oggi* (Milan, Franco Angeli, 1990), 177–96; for the latter, see Ross Harrison, *Hobbes, Locke, and Confusion's Masterpiece*, 126ff.
66. *Lev.*, xvii, 13, 87ff/109. In this vein, Noel Malcolm points out that 'rational obedience' and 'passionate obedience' are 'interdependent' in Hobbes's argument; 'The title page of Leviathan, seen in a curious perspective', 228.
67. Schmitt, *Der Leviathan*, 39ff.
68. On Hobbes and laughter, see Quentin Skinner, 'Hobbes and the classical theory of laughter', in *Visions of Politics*, III, *Hobbes and Civil Science* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), 142–76.

3 Sense and Nonsense about Sense

Hobbes and the Aristotelians on Sense Perception and Imagination

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary, uninitiated reader perusing the main text of *Leviathan* is in for quite a surprise: this classic of political philosophy does not begin with a discussion of sovereignty, political laws, the concept of society or other issues contemporary political philosophers get excited about. Quite the contrary, Hobbes commences his work with the genesis and function of sense perception, a topic that contemporary philosophers of whatever denomination would not even dare to touch upon anymore, leaving it safely in the hands of the scientists. An even more striking trait of the first two chapters of *Leviathan* is that they are so fiercely polemical. Aristotelian philosophy, the so-called philosophy of the 'schools', is accused of 'insignificant speech', 'absurd doctrines' and other intellectual sins. One wonders, why this unusually impolitic start, why these polemics?

This chapter is an attempt to answer these questions, especially the second one. We will reconstruct Hobbes's debate with the Aristotelians on sense perception and the political agenda that underlies it. However, before we can embark on answering these questions we have first to get at least a rough idea of the Aristotelian doctrine Hobbes so vehemently attacked. The first section of this chapter is therefore devoted to a necessarily brief and rather general overview of the Aristotelian position on sense perception and imagination. Then we move on to a detailed discussion of the main elements of Hobbes's critique of Aristotelianism, his alternative theory and its theoretical suppositions. First we shall investigate Hobbes's doctrine of sense perception, then that of imagination. All of this serves as a preparation for answering our initial questions, which will be dealt with

in the final section where we will show why Hobbes introduced his political philosophy with sense perception and imagination, and why this had to take such a strong anti-Aristotelian line. Our discussion will be restricted to the first two chapters of *Leviathan*, 'Of Sense' and 'Of Imagination', respectively. The third chapter, 'Of the Consequence or Train of Imagination', deals with a topic that, although related, cannot be discussed in full in the limited space available here.

When Hobbes wrote *Leviathan*, Aristotelian philosophy in whatever guise still dominated the academic curricula. As we know, René Descartes wrote in the most denigrating terms about the Aristotelian education he had received at the Jesuit College of La Flèche. Similarly, in his autobiography Hobbes complained about the uninspiring and rambling Aristotelianism he had had to cope with as a student of Magdalen Hall, Oxford.¹ Hobbes and Descartes belonged to a generation of nonacademic philosophers that tried to break the monopoly of the Aristotelians. They presented themselves as self-styled *moderni* who would chase away the scholastic darkness by the light of reason. No one in his right mind would deny that there was indeed something new going on in modern philosophy. Nevertheless, recent research has shown that the relation between Aristotelianism and modern philosophy is more complicated than might seem at first sight. The moderns were more affected by their Aristotelian education than they were prepared to admit and whatever the force of their attempt to break with petrified Aristotelianism, in many cases they had to formulate their alternatives in terms comprehensible to a larger public that like them was steeped in Aristotelianism.²

In Hobbes's case there is no doubt about his intention to radically erase scholastic philosophy, and this chapter will try to answer the question of the deeper political motives behind this campaign. Nevertheless, we will also see that sometimes, especially in the context of his doctrine of imagination, Hobbes polemicizes against the schools using arguments drawn from other strands of the Aristotelian tradition. As in so many cases, the history of Aristotelianism has been written by the victors (i.e., the moderns). One of the distortions the latter introduced was the idea that Aristotelianism was a unified attempt at producing bogus arguments. In recent years we have become aware that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century

Aristotelianism was especially rich and complex.³ We shall see this conviction confirmed by a close study of the contexts and sources of Hobbes's doctrine of sense perception and imagination.

THE ARISTOTELIANS ON SENSE PERCEPTION AND IMAGINATION

Now it is obviously an oversimplification to speak of *the* Aristotelian position on sense perception and imagination *tout court*.⁴ But for our purposes we can discern two characteristics that most Aristotelian theories seem to have shared and that Hobbes repudiated vehemently. First, sense perception was described in nonmechanical terms as a process that actualized inner potentialities of the soul; and second, sense perception was seen as geared towards real qualities existing in the world. On the first point, following Aristotle, most late scholastic textbooks describe sense perception as a process leading from the object, as composed of matter and form, to the reception of the sensible form (without the matter) by the immaterial soul.⁵ This process was thought of as occurring in several stages. First of all, by means of its sensible qualities such as color, the object continually emits sensible species in all directions, which resemble the object from which they originate. These species are immaterial qualities that are impressed on the medium (i.e., air or water).⁶ The scholastics usually conceived of this process as a qualitative change or alteration, although, especially in the case of sound, they increasingly acknowledged the role of local motion produced by the object in the medium.

Next, the species are believed to be received by the sense organs: color and light by the eye, olfactory species by the nose, audible species by the ear, and so on. The various species thus activate the various sensory faculties, which in turn depend on the sensible part of the human soul. Following Aristotle, most authors interpreted this process in terms of the potentiality-act-distinction. For example, in visual perception the object produces its color in the beholder through its representative species, activating at the same time the recipient's faculty of visual perception.⁷ Aristotle in fact claims that the object makes the sense organ similar in quality to itself, so that the color red also makes the eye red in a certain way, actualizing a potentiality within the sense organ.⁸ On the second point, it is clear

that the scholastic view of sense perception involves a fundamental realism concerning sensible qualities. This has already been made clear by the description of sense perception as the reception of the sensible form without the matter. Species are 'similitudes', representing the nature of the external object, which is the bearer of real qualities such as color, smell, and odors. It is exactly these real qualities that play an active role in the process of sense perception. They emit the species that affect the sense organs.

But sense perception was not the only form of cognition in Aristotelian epistemology, and the species emitted by the external object were believed to be transported by sensory vaporous spirits⁹ to the brain, the brain being understood as the seat of the faculties of inner sense.¹⁰ Although there was no consensus about the exact number and function of the different inner senses, most authors agreed that they included *sensus communis*, the facility to compare and combine the particular pieces of sensory information gathered by each external sense. For instance, the visual sense as such cannot judge the difference between colors and noises, but *sensus communis* can.¹¹ Scholastics heavily debated the number and terminology of the inner senses. For instance, some authors distinguished between passive and active imagination, reserving the name *phantasia* for the latter faculty, whereas others only spoke of one *imaginatio sive phantasia*.¹² In the sixteenth century there was a distinct tendency to leave behind the theoretical debate on the number, and names of incorporeal faculties came to the fore.¹³ Some authors, notably Melanchthon and his followers, argued that the study of organic functions requires a physiological examination of the organs themselves.¹⁴ Thus physiological considerations gained importance over the faculties of the soul. Nevertheless, these authors continued to maintain the validity of separate inner sense faculties located within various 'regions' of the brain.¹⁵ For instance they still upheld the distinction between sense, imagination and intellect. In scholastic philosophy sense grasps the object insofar as it is present, whereas imagination can represent the object in its absence. However the intellect (*intellectus*) can grasp the object whether present or absent,¹⁶ while the imagination plays a mediating role between sense and intellect. According to this view, the imagination retains the *phantasmata*, or sense images, upon which the intellect's production of universal concept is based.¹⁷

Hobbes on Sense Perception

Sense perception was the topic that launched Hobbes's scientific career and remained one of his central concerns. Light and vision became for him the special explanatory model for all natural phenomena. He wrote no less than three specific optical tracts but also devoted a substantial number of chapters or parts of books and manuscripts to optics and sense perception, in particular vision, the most important being the large chapter on sense perception that opens the fourth part of *De Corpore* of 1655, entitled 'Physics, or the Phenomena of Nature'. We are fortunate in having a report on the genesis of this life-long interest in sense perception in his autobiography, where Hobbes recounts how he had posed the question 'what is sense?' at a meeting of 'learned men', most probably scholastics. He clearly did not get any satisfactory answers and had to look for his own explanations.¹⁸ Quite remarkably for such an antimystical thinker, he then experienced an almost religious vision, being struck by the insight that not only grounded his doctrine of sense perception but became the basis for his whole scientific project: This was the famous insight that if all things were at rest, or always moved in the same way, there would be no variety in the world and hence no perception.¹⁹ In other words, sense perception depended on local motion. It was this insight that inaugurated Hobbes's project to find mechanical causes for all natural phenomena including sense perception and other human cognitive functions. Together with Descartes and Gassendi he thus founded a mechanical philosophy that challenged Aristotelian orthodoxy.²⁰ Like all mechanical philosophers Hobbes accepted only one dynamic, local motion, denying any form of inner potentiality or spontaneity and maintaining that all physical change should be explained in terms of bodies acting upon external stimuli. Thus all natural change required physical impact, ruling out the causal efficacy of incorporeal entities.

One of the most important philosophical problems of the first half of the seventeenth century was the question to what extent mechanical principles applying to the natural world also applied to the human world of cognition and volition. Hobbes had a simple but radical answer: they do apply. As we shall see in fuller detail later, his philosophical program was designed to reduce all human psychology to mechanics. The scientist should not in principle treat human

behavior differently from that of falling stones, he maintained, the paradigm case of this mechanical program being precisely sense perception. So *Leviathan* starts with an attempt to provide a mechanical explanation of sense perception, beginning with Hobbes's claims that the motion of the sensible object enters the sense organs themselves. From there this motion is transmitted by the 'nerves and other strings and membranes of the body' to the heart, where it causes a 'counter-pressure, or endeavor (*conatus*) of the heart to deliver itself'.²¹ This counterpressure is directed outwards, back towards the diverse sense organs. As this motion is extraverted, we perceive sensible qualities as actually existing outside of us, whereas in reality they are simply a reactive motion within us.

This explanation is admittedly rather crude, even by Hobbes's standards. But he does offer an excuse. He informs the reader that it is not necessary to treat 'the natural cause of sense' in *Leviathan* because he has 'elsewhere written of the same at large'.²² There are four possible candidates for this 'elsewhere': *Of Humane Nature* of 1650 (better known as the first part of *The Elements of Law*); the so-called *Tractatus Opticus I* (chapter vii of *Universae Geometriae Mixtaeque Mathematicae Synopsis, et Bini Refractionum Demonstratarum Tractatus* published by Marin Mersenne in 1644); the two nonpublished works: *De Motu*, whose chapter xxx dealing with sense perception was paraphrased by Mersenne in the part 'Ballistica' of his *Cogitata physico-mathematica* of 1644; and *De Corpore*, which was only published in 1655, four years after *Leviathan*.²³ The first candidate is implausible, given that this publication was not authorized by Hobbes and moreover does not contain a very large discussion of sense perception. The *Tractatus Opticus I* does not address the subject in any detail either. Nor is *De Motu* a plausible candidate, since it is hardly conceivable that Hobbes would refer to a work he did not publish and which did not even circulate in manuscript. *De Corpore* remains. By 1651 Hobbes probably still hoped to publish this work in the same year, and the extensive account of sense perception in chapter xxv, belonging to the oldest parts of the work, would certainly have been ready by 1651.

If we look carefully at this text, we do indeed find a more refined and extensive account than that offered in *Leviathan*. To begin with in *De Corpore* Hobbes explicitly subsumes sense perception under the general laws of mechanics, a matter of only passing reference

in *Leviathan*.²⁴ In *De Corpore* Hobbes refers to three principles of mechanics, the first being that all change is motion, and the second principle being that the motion of a given body can only be generated by another moving body next to it. Finally, Hobbes invokes the principle of resistance in order to demonstrate that the motion of external objects causes a reactive *conatus* in the heart.²⁵ The first two principles are used to explain sensation as a motion in our body caused by the motion of external objects and transmitted through the medium. Thus the account in *De Corpore* adds precision to that of *Leviathan*. While *De Corpore* stresses the role of the animal spirits, the tenuous, invisible matter in our bodies that transports motion from our sense organs to the brain and heart, *Leviathan* does not mention these subtle bodies.

The last principle is of special interest to us because it explains why Hobbes uses the term 'endeavor' in *Leviathan*. This is simply the English translation of the Latin 'conatus' which plays such a crucial role in Hobbes's mechanics.²⁶ Hobbes adopted the term 'conatus' in his polemics against Aristotelian dynamics, in which bodies have inner tendencies, inclinations or strivings for which the scholastics themselves used terms such as 'conatus' and 'inclinatio'. So, for instance, according to the Aristotelians heavy bodies have a downward 'conatus', an inner striving for the centre of the cosmos, which may or may not result in actual motion, depending on whether we impede this tendency. Hobbes forbids these strivings and tendencies, concluding either that these inner tendencies are actual motion themselves or that they are figments of the mind, and thus radically redefining the term 'conatus' to mean literally the principle of motion (i.e., the smallest beginning of motion itself, not something that precedes and spurs actual motion). So in free fall, for instance, it is the first, insensible part of the motion that carries the body downward. The fact that this tendency or 'conatus' is insensible explains exactly why people think it is something different from actual motion. In *De Corpore* Hobbes developed a technical definition of 'conatus' partially derived from Galileo: 'conatus' is 'motion made in less space and time than can be given; that is, less than can be determined or assigned by exposition or number; that is, motion made through the length of a point, and in an instant or point of time'.²⁷ Here we have to bear in mind that, according to Hobbes,

points are not unextended, but are only *considered* to be unextended by us.

Hobbes employs this concept of 'conatus' in many contexts. Already in his first philosophical manuscript, the so-called *Short Tract*, Hobbes declares that 'almost all the wayes of Nature, be to us not so perceptible',²⁸ an insight that in fact became the cornerstone of Hobbes's mechanical program. Hobbes claims in *De Corpore* that most natural processes, from the production of light to elasticity, occur through insensible, indefinitely small motions or 'conatus' at the corpuscular level, while static phenomena such as hardness are explained as resulting from a swift yet imperceptible motion of the hard body's particles.²⁹ In other words, like any other physical action resistance is also motion, in this case consisting in a 'conatus' at the corpuscular level. And in this sense, *Leviathan's* description of sense perception in terms of a 'resistance' or 'endeavor' contains an implicit reference to this third principle of mechanics as listed in *De Corpore*. Just as the swiftly moving particles of a hard body resist the motion of other objects working on it, so the pulsating heart counters motion coming through the senses, and sense perception is nothing more than an example of the regular mechanical interaction between natural bodies.

Hobbes's claim that the cause of sense lies in external bodies exerting pressure on our sense organs contrasts rather sharply with the usual scholastic account. Most Aristotelians held that the sensitive part of the human soul has its proper *operatio* in sense perception. This *operatio* was seen as an actualization of inner potentialities triggered by, but not fully determined by, the species emitted by the objects. So most late Aristotelian models of sense perception acknowledge the human soul as an independent causal factor. The Paduan Aristotelian Jacopo Zabarella, for instance, stated that 'neither the object, nor its species is the efficient cause of vision'.³⁰ Zabarella held that the soul is the proximate efficient cause of sensation because it is the soul that completes the final judgment on sense, exerting its own innate powers.³¹ The Aristotelians must have been aghast therefore at Hobbes's description of sense perception as a purely reactive motion that in principle does not differ from that of a ball being pushed by another ball. In their eyes this amounted to a gross denial of the human soul and its innate perceptual powers.

Here, however, a modern critic rushes to Hobbes's defence. According to Jeffrey Barnouw, Hobbes's account of sense perception as a reactive 'conatus' was less crudely mechanistic than it is here portrayed. Barnouw claims that 'the role of *conatus*, or *endeavor*, in the analysis of *inner motions* epitomizes the irreducibility of Hobbesian physio-psychology to the terms of analysis of motion of and in inanimate bodies'.³² According to him Hobbes's doctrine of sense perception left room for intentional factors, such as openness towards future sensation. But in my view Barnouw ignores the fact that Hobbes subsumes sense perception – explicitly in *De Corpore*, implicitly in *Leviathan* – under the general laws of nature. Hobbes does not describe intentionality from within, from a first-person perspective, as modern phenomenologists would do. Rather, not unlike modern neuro-science, Hobbes treats sense perception, and consciousness in general, as phenomena that need to be explained by scientific means, which for seventeenth-century mechanical philosophy meant reducing them to nothing other than matter in motion. As we shall see, this project of 'explaining consciousness' is not only grounded in Hobbes's general view of the structure of science, but also has a political-philosophical agenda that drives it.³³

So far, we have seen how Hobbes challenges the first element of Aristotelian theories of sense perception noted earlier, namely that they describe the process of sensation in nonmechanical terms as a process that actualizes inner potentialities of the soul. But it has already become clear that this challenge is intrinsically connected to his repudiation of the other constitutive element of Aristotelian theories of sense perception, namely that sense perception is geared to real qualities existing in the world. The 'rebound' explains not just that we perceive objects in the outer world, but that we perceive sensible qualities that cannot be found as such in the external world. The subjectivity of sensible qualities was an integral part of seventeenth-century mechanical thinking in general. If the natural world is reduced to nothing more than matter in motion, the other side of the coin is simply that all the qualities we perceive in the world are subjective mental phenomena. In reality they are nothing but some form of corpuscular motion that our brain translates into a corresponding sensible quality. Galileo in his *Saggiatore* of 1623, taking up suggestions formulated by the ancient atomists, had already suspected that all sensible qualities could be explained by

the diversity of motion coming from external bodies. These bodies in turn were thought to be nothing more than the bearers of extension, form and other quantitative properties that affect us by means of touch.³⁴

Interestingly, Hobbes not only offers a mechanical explanation of why we perceive sensible qualities in the external world, but he also gives empirical arguments. First, 'as pressing, rubbing, or striking the eye, makes us fancy a light, and pressing the ear, produceth a din, so do the bodies also we see, or hear, produce the same by their strong though unobserved action'.³⁵ We know by experience that if I get a hit on the head I see stars that in reality are not there. Now what Hobbes does is to make this exceptional case the general model of vision and, by extrapolation, of all other forms of sense perception. He suggests that this case demonstrates that *all* perception is caused by a mechanical impact on our sense organs, which we subjectively translate into the perception of sensible qualities. His second empirical argument states: 'for if those colors and sounds were in the bodies, or objects, that cause them, they could not be severed from them, as by glasses, and in echoes by reflection, we see they are, where we know the thing we see is in one place, the appearance in another'.³⁶ This second argument has the same structure as the first: I see colored objects in a mirror. Clearly, the color I see in the mirror does not inhere in the external object itself. Hence all colors and, by extrapolation, all sensible qualities are 'fancy'. Both claims seem to make an unwarranted inference from the particular case to a universal law. But more interesting than their validity is the question why Hobbes produces these empirical arguments at all. An answer to this question is spelled out in the chapter on sense perception of his earlier *Elements of Law* (1640). There he makes it clear that

[b]ecause the *image* in vision consisting of *color* and *shape* is the knowledge we have of the qualities of the object of that sense; it is no hard matter for a man to fall into this opinion, that the same *color* and *shape* are the *very qualities themselves*; and for the same cause, that *sound* and *noise* are the *qualities of the bell*, or of the air. And this opinion hath been so long received, that the *contrary* must needs appear a great paradox.³⁷

In other words, what we find here is the typical seventeenth-century clash between hard science and common-sense prejudice. It does not suffice to give a straightforward scientific explanation of why we

perceive sensible qualities in the world, since all of us are stuck in naive-realist prejudice. Our senses daily seem to tell us that the grass *is* green and not that it just *appears* to be. Obviously, then, the most effective way of liberating us from common-sense prejudice is an appeal to common sense itself, which is precisely what Hobbes does here.

But the job is not done yet. Hobbes not only has to combat common-sense prejudice but also the paradoxes of the schools. Instead of enlightening us and freeing us of our prejudices the scholastics for centuries reinforced man's belief in the reality of sensible qualities. They did so by producing what Hobbes repeatedly calls 'insignificant speech'. For, in order to explain the exact correspondence between things in the external world and their images in our mind, the scholastics assumed that objects emit images or species that travel from the object to the perceiver. Like Descartes and other *novatores*, Hobbes in fact misrepresents the species by portraying them as images flying through the air.³⁸ To make some sense of the doctrine of species he assumes that they move locally. In judging all that moves necessarily to be corporeal, Hobbes is obliged to conceive of species as nothing other than bodies. He thus concludes that the notion of species illustrates how the scholastics confound appearances and real things, mistakenly joining the name of a *phantasma* or image with the name of a body.³⁹ The doctrine of species that results is 'worse than any paradox, as being a plain impossibility'.⁴⁰ As we shall see, this criticism has an important political agenda driving it.

Hobbes's doctrine of the subjectivity of sensible qualities should not be confused with Locke's later distinction between primary and secondary qualities. In Locke's account our ideas of primary qualities (solidity, extension, figure, motion and rest) resemble the bodies themselves. By contrast our ideas of secondary qualities (colors, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile impressions) bear no resemblance to external bodies at all. They originate from the power bodies have 'to produce various sensations in us by their *primary Qualities*'.⁴¹ In other words, our ideas of secondary qualities are produced by the impact of insensible atoms, which are only equipped with quantitative properties such as figure and motion. According to Locke, my idea of the height of a tower may vary according to my distance from the tower. Nevertheless, by comparing diverse ideas and applying

the laws of perspective I am able to get a reliable representation of the tower's height. In that sense, ideas of primary qualities have a correlate in reality, while ideas of secondary qualities are completely subjective.

As Tom Sorrell nicely explains, Hobbes does not make any such distinction.⁴² According to Hobbes 'sense in all cases, is nothing else but original fancy'.⁴³ Not only color and sounds, but all other ideas are only in the mind: 'and though at some certain distance the real and very object seem invested with the fancy it begets in us, yet still the object is one thing, the image or fancy is another'.⁴⁴ What Hobbes seems to say here is not unlike Berkeley's later point that apparent form and extension vary with the perceiver just like secondary colors such as color, which means that size and other primary qualities cannot be in the alleged external substance either.⁴⁵ In any case, the upshot is that all our ideas, including Locke's ideas of primary qualities, are subjective. Hobbes's distinction is not between subjective and objective ideas, but between subjective ideas and objective features of real objects (i.e., magnitude and motion), on which our ideas causally depend. But then, we may ask, if all our ideas are 'fancy' without a single exception, how can we make the transition from the subjective world of our ideas to the real world of matter in motion? This question is especially pressing given Hobbes empiricist conviction that 'there is no conception in a man's mind which hath not at first, totally or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of sense'.⁴⁶ This is more or less a translation of the famous Aristotelian dictum that 'nothing is in the intellect which has not before been received in the senses'. If the intellect fully depends on sensible ideas, which in turn are all 'fancy', how then can it frame a realist explanation of sense perception itself? How do we escape from the subjectivist, almost solipsist cage of our ideas?

Hobbes's answer to this question is that first of all the relation between world and mind does not have to do with representation, but with causal dependence. Hobbes consistently tries to explain 'appearance' itself, the wondrous phenomenon that our ideas represent the world in terms of causal dependence on the world of matter in motion. In other words, Hobbes tries to reduce intentionality to a mechanical phenomenon. This is quite apparent from Hobbes's proof of the statement that all change in ideas is some change or other in the perceiver.⁴⁷ The basic premise of this argument is that

the appearance of change *to us* is itself a physical change *within us*. Now, this physical change itself needs to be an effect. This effect, in turn, can only be produced if there is a change in motion of the sentient body, which for its part can only be brought about by an external moving body. We might add that, according to Hobbes, we cannot conceive of motion otherwise than as supported by an extended body. In this way, Hobbes concludes from perceptual change within us to the existence of magnitude and motion as the only objective features of the real world.

The problem with this argument is that Hobbes silently switches from the appearance of change to physical change in our body, this being the effect of an external body. In other words, the argument presupposes what it purports to prove. Hobbes's answer to the question of how to find the bridge between our subjective ideas and the external world is that our ideas do not represent the world in the strict sense of the world, but causally depend on it. Sadly, however, the only argument he supplies for this statement is fatally circular. In the end, Hobbes is stuck with a dualism between the supposedly real world of brute matter in motion and the phantasmagorical world of ideas, without being able to explain how these two worlds hang together. But maybe he is in good company. Hobbes's attempt, crude though it may be, is not structurally different from that of present day physicalism that explains intentionality from without. Just like Hobbes, physicalists reduce the first person perspective to a third-person one. Lynn Rudder Baker's argument against this form of physicalism also seems to strike Hobbes's particular version: 'trying to break into the intentional realm from "the outside" is like trying to break into the room where you are sitting'.⁴⁸

HOBBS ON THE IMAGINATION

As in the case of sense perception, Hobbes's doctrine of imagination expressly subsumes human psychology under the laws of mechanics. The second chapter of *Leviathan* starts by invoking the principle of inertia or conservation of rectilinear motion, which was the foundation stone of mechanical philosophy. By stating that any moving object will persist in its rectilinear motion unless it is hindered by another body, the moderns undermined Aristotelian teleology because motion was no longer conceived of having a natural

end.⁴⁹ As a consequence, the entire Aristotelian dynamic vocabulary with its fulfillment of inner tendencies was swept away. Hobbes certainly exploited the anti-Aristotelian potential of the doctrine of inertia to the full as *Leviathan* demonstrates. Like his fellow *moderni*, Descartes and notably Spinoza, Hobbes is convinced that Aristotelianism suffers from a thoroughgoing anthropomorphism. Humans obviously seek rest after having moved a while. Nothing is wrong with that, but things start getting problematic if we extrapolate from this experience to the world of inanimate objects:

from hence it is that the schools say heavy bodies fall downwards out of an appetite to rest, and to conserve their nature in that place which is most proper for them, ascribing appetite and knowledge of what is good for their conservation (which is more than man has) to things inanimate, absurdly.⁵⁰

Although he is quite happy to use inertia as a weapon against the schools, Hobbes clearly had no more than a vague intuition about its explanatory potential, especially compared with his arch-enemy Descartes.⁵¹ This is clear from *Leviathan* where Hobbes evokes the principle without specifying that it is rectilinear, and not circular, motion that is preserved: 'when a thing is in motion, it will eternally be in motion, unless somewhat else stay it'.⁵² Hobbes goes on to claim that this process of 'hindering' does not occur instantaneously, but rather happens 'in time, and by degrees',⁵³ giving the example of waves driven by strong winds; the waves roll onwards long after the winds have ceased, though gradually weakening and finally disappearing altogether. So it is with sense perception. If, having perceived an object one subsequently closes one's eyes, the image lingers. As Hobbes puts it, the motion involved in this perception slowly 'decays', and he calls this after-effect imagination: 'imagination therefore is nothing but *decaying sense*'.⁵⁴ Hobbes's doctrine of the conservation of motion requires that perceptual decay be not caused by the object itself, but rather result from a countermovement. In explaining this countermovement he again uses examples drawn from the natural world, comparing imagination to star-light obscured by the sun; 'which stars do no less exercise their virtue, by which they are visible, in the day than in the night'.⁵⁵ Likewise *phantasmata* existing within the imagination wane with the course of time as a steady input of new motions coming forth

from external objects obscures our old perceptions: 'for the continual change of man's body destroys in time the parts which in sense were moved'.⁵⁶

'Imagination', defined as 'decaying sense', as Hobbes uses the term, comprises several kinds of mental phenomena. The first one he discusses is memory. He holds that memory is materially identical to imagination, and that we call it memory only if we wish to concentrate on imagination as a form of perception relating to the past. Therefore '*imagination* and *memory* are but one thing, which for diverse considerations hath diverse names'.⁵⁷ Other forms of imagination include dreams, fictional objects (such as centaurs or golden mountains and visual illusions) and understanding, which Hobbes defines as imagination 'that is raised in man (or any other creature endued with the faculty of imagining) by words, or other voluntary signs'.⁵⁸ Hobbes adds that this kind of imagination is common to both man and animal. Besides these diverse kinds of 'singular imaginations' there are also several series of imaginations that he calls 'train of thoughts'. We will concentrate now on these various 'singular imaginations' and their relation to the Aristotelian tradition. For Hobbes clearly exploits empiricist and kinematic tendencies within the Aristotelian tradition.⁵⁹ In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle had defined imagination (*phantasia*) as a 'feeble sort of sensation',⁶⁰ which is exactly Hobbes's definition. Moreover, in his *Parva Naturalia* Aristotle compares the generation of dreams to water, which after being set in motion by a projectile, continues to move onwards.⁶¹ In dreams, according to Aristotle, those motions that during the day are suppressed by stronger motions of actual sense perception rise to the surface.⁶² Finally, Aristotle also mentions subspecies of imagination (*phantasia*) similar to those listed by Hobbes.

But Hobbes in fact vehemently opposes the scholastic doctrines of imagination and the inner senses summarized earlier:

some say the senses receive the species of things and deliver them to the common sense, and the common sense delivers them over to the fancy, and the fancy to the memory, and the memory to the judgment, like handing of things from one to another, with many words making nothing understood.⁶³

According to Hobbes, 'sense' and 'imagination' are simply names that refer to one and the same motion in corporeal spirits. We call that motion sensation when the object is *present*, and imagination

when it is *absent* from our perceptual field. In other words, sense and imagination are not produced by separate faculties. The diverse forms of imagination are not materially different either. 'Dreams' and 'memory', for example, are also different names referring to the same motion but with respect to different considerations. Hobbes also importantly abolishes the traditional distinction between reason and imagination. He explicitly rejects the scholastic distinction between *imaginatio* or *phantasia* and the intellect.⁶⁴

In scholastic philosophy, as we have seen, the imagination plays a mediating role between sense and intellect. According to this view the imagination retains the *phantasmata* upon which the intellect's production of the universal concept is based. But Hobbes will not have this. To understand universal names we only need remember to which set of particular *phantasmata* the universal name refers. We have no need for an active intellect that 'illustrates' by, or abstracts from, *phantasmata* to produce universal concepts. The imagination can do this job by allowing us to remember that a certain term on one occasion excited the image of a certain object, and on another occasion a different image.⁶⁵ In Hobbes's cognitive psychology, language thus takes over the role of the Scholastic's active intellect. Universality is a property of names, not of concepts.⁶⁶ Since concepts are 'decaying sense', they are *per definitionem* particular. These concepts are all *phantasmata*, a term that Hobbes uses as an equivalent of terms such as *idea*, *conceptus*, and *imago*. For the Aristotelians *phantasma* is only a kind of recollection of an actual sensation, representing the object in its absence.⁶⁷ As a corollary of his rejection of an absolute distinction between sense, imagination and reason, Hobbes uses the term *phantasma* to refer to all kinds of cognitive content: direct sense perception as well as recollection and other forms of indirect knowledge.

Given the parallels with the *Parva Naturalia* mentioned earlier, Hobbes's doctrine of imagination appears to use certain empiricist and naturalist elements of the Aristotelian tradition to oppose what he sees as the rigid formalization of scholastic faculty psychology. Nevertheless, it is far-fetched to claim that Hobbes's 'psychological discussions are packed with phrases borrowed without acknowledgment from *De Anima* and the *Parva Naturalia*'.⁶⁸ To the extent that Hobbes was indeed influenced by the *Parva Naturalia*, it appears to be through the mediation of Italian naturalist philosophers such

as Bernardino Telesio and Tommaso Campanella, who were widely read in early modern England.⁶⁹

But whatever its intellectual pedigree, Hobbes's doctrine of imagination stands out for its radical materialism and mechanism. Like sense perception, imagination, including intellectual knowledge, is explained from without. It is simply a certain motion lingering in our bodies, and it is not essentially different from the motion involved in sense perception. Again Hobbes neglects the phenomenal aspect of our *phantasmata*, by which we subjectively differentiate between, for example, memory and understanding. This approach leaves many questions unanswered. In the case of memory and sensation, for example, we may wonder who or what actually does the comparing of past sensation with the present and whether this should not count as a true inner activity. Hobbes appears supremely uninterested in all of this. What he tries to do is to mechanize the mind, making it an intrinsic part of the world of matter and motion. *Res extensa* and *Res cogitans* are one and the same. Although Hobbes's doctrine of imagination exploits naturalist tendencies in the Aristotelian tradition, this full-fledged materialism is quite uniquely his own.

The Political Agenda

We should return now to our original question: why does Hobbes speak at such great length about sense perception and imagination at the beginning of a work that is supposed to deal with political philosophy and why does he do so in such a staunchly anti-Aristotelian manner? The first question is easily answered by pointing to the force of the system. Hobbes composed a tri-partite system (*Elements of Philosophy*), comprising natural philosophy (*De Corpore*), anthropology (*De Homine*) and political philosophy (*De Cive*). While the first part deals with bodies in general, the second studies the functioning of human bodies, whereas the third part explains the generation of an artificial body, namely the state. In Hobbes's philosophy of science, sense perception and imagination belong to physics, the science that studies natural phenomena, finding its basis in the most wondrous of all phenomena, namely the fact that things do appear to us by means of sense perception.⁷⁰ Strictly speaking, *Leviathan* falls outside the tri-partite system. Exactly for this reason, however,

Hobbes summarizes his relevant findings in natural philosophy at the beginning of *Leviathan* so as to secure a firm scientific grounding of his civil science. Much ink has been spilt over the question to what extent Hobbes's trilogy really is a unified system, both from a methodological and a doctrinal point of view.⁷¹ We will not venture into this debate here.

We now have thus a pretty clear notion why Hobbes deals with natural philosophy and psychology at the beginning of *Leviathan*. But that still leaves open the question why he does so in such an anti-Aristotelian manner. Yes, Aristotelian natural philosophy and metaphysics are dead wrong, but why should this bother us *qua* political philosophers? Fortunately, Hobbes himself addresses this matter:

But to what purpose [may some man say] is such subtlety in a work of this nature, where I pretend to nothing but what is necessary to the doctrine of government and obedience? It is to this purpose: that men may no longer suffer themselves to be abused by them that by this doctrine of *separated essences*, built on the vain philosophy of Aristotle, would fright them from obeying the laws of their country with empty names, as men fright birds from the corn with an empty doublet, a hat, and a crooked stick.⁷²

Here we have the reason, Aristotelian natural philosophy and metaphysics should be combated because they have direct and fatal political consequences. These stem from the fact that scholastics have confirmed common prejudice, thus causing irrational fears leading to sedition, rebellion and a general loss of political stability. This common prejudice can be summarized in one word: reification. In our daily life we have the tendency to reify what according to Hobbes's mechanical philosophy is only subjective. The first instances of this are sensible qualities. Hobbes thinks, as we have seen, that these are nothing other than mechanically provoked reactions stemming from the heart, in other words nothing other than a certain motion in our bodies. Phenomenologically, however, they are things that really lie outside us. Whereas this example of reification originates in sense perception, the latter has its basis in the imagination: the belief in 'spirits and dead men's ghosts walking in churchyards'.⁷³ We sometimes have strong images of deceased persons and can easily confuse these images with real entities. According to Hobbes this twofold reification of the imaginary is wrong,

but it is nevertheless understandable and can be easily explained. Given that in the case of sense perception the *conatus* is directed outwards, we are easily led to believe that sensible qualities actually exist outside us. In the case of the imagination, he admits it is sometimes very difficult to separate direct vision and sense from dreams and other 'fancies'.⁷⁴ As we have seen, Hobbes does not make an absolute distinction between sense perception and imagination, not even between the several forms of the imagination. In the end it is all the same motion caused by external objects, sometimes stronger and more direct as in the case of sense perception, sometimes weaker and more indirect as in the case of imagination.

Reification therefore comes quite naturally to us. Nevertheless, it is still wrong, and Hobbes is convinced people should be told so. This should have been the task of the universities, but instead of enlightening the common people, they for centuries only confirmed deep-rooted prejudice. In the case of sense perception, scholastics elevated common-sense reification to a philosophical doctrine of real sensible qualities. They compounded the errors by adding the doctrine of substantial form, the supposedly immaterial essence of natural things and the bearer of real qualities. By contrast, Hobbes's mechanical world-view explains that external objects are nothing but heaps of matter that by the motion of their particles can evoke certain images in us. Substantial forms are simply an unwarranted projection on the basis of these subjective images.⁷⁵ In the case of the imagination, the scholastics similarly confirmed belief in ghosts and spirits by means of their doctrine of incorporeal spirits and incorporeal substances. According to Hobbes, human reason can only perceive what has first been received by the senses. The senses can only grasp that which is finite and occupies space (i.e., that which is a body):

[b]ecause, whatsoever (as I said before) we conceive has been perceived first by sense, either all at once or by parts, a man can have no thought representing any thing not subject to sense. No man therefore can conceive anything, but he must conceive it in some place, and endued with some determinate magnitude; and which may be divided into parts.⁷⁶

In other words, philosophy can only concern itself with corporeal being. Because it is no use for a philosopher to speculate about incomprehensible being, we might as well simply equate the concepts of substance or *ens* (entity or being) and *corpus* (body). For

spirits, this can mean two things. Either, they are nothing other than figments of the mind, which is true for most forms of idolatry and demonology. Or, they are beings that consist of imperceptibly fine matter, as is true for the animal spirits that flow through our bodies. In fact, much of Part Three of *Leviathan* is devoted to a demonstration that the Scriptural passages speaking about angels, devils or indeed the human soul, refer to corporeal entities of some sort and certainly not to incorporeal substances. Given that to be a substance means to be corporeal the very notion of incorporeal substance is an oxymoron.⁷⁷ Moreover, the scholastic reification of sensible qualities and products of the imagination is coupled with a fatal *logical* reification. According to Hobbes, the copula 'est' (is) in the proposition has no ontological meaning but simply a logical function. By means of the copula we signify that the first name means the same thing as the second name. For instance the proposition 'man is a living being' means that 'man' and 'living being' are names of the same underlying subject. Technically speaking we would not even need a copula; simply putting names in the right order would suffice.⁷⁸ But what the scholastics do is again to reify the logical copula, resulting in the doctrine of 'separate essences'. When using the term 'separate' or 'abstract' essence, Hobbes appears to combine the scholastic notion of *entia separata* with the scholastic doctrine of metaphysical abstraction. In scholastic metaphysics the class of *entia separata* or *substantia separata* comprises spiritual or incorporeal substances such as God, the angels and the human soul. Hobbes's reference to 'abstract' essences has to do with the scholastic theory of metaphysical abstraction. God and the angels are seen as entities that are abstracted or separated from matter *secundum rem et rationem*, in reality as well as according to their essence or definition. Some scholastics, most notably the Thomists, held that the human soul, or in any case its intellective part, is an incorporeal essence, although unlike God and the angels it has an inherent aptitude to unite with the human body.

According to Hobbes, this doctrine of 'separate essences' underlies some of the most politically dangerous scholastic doctrines, namely that of an incorporeal soul after death, the idea of ghosts haunting graveyards, the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the idea that faith is an infused, or as he mocks it, 'inblown', virtue.⁷⁹ Whereas the first ideas are papist *bizareries*, the last is a Puritan notion.⁸⁰

What all these absurd conceptions share is that they serve to sustain the clergy's position of power, regardless of denomination.⁸¹ For it is considered the clergy's exclusive task to facilitate our passage to eternal life, to exorcise evil spirits, to transform bread and wine into the body and blood of God Himself, and to speak 'enthused' with the Spirit. Hobbes maintains that these four clerical tasks are based upon the false assumption that something supposedly 'incorporeal' can stand on its own, in other words that it can function as a 'separate or abstract essence', in the way, for instance, that transubstantiation involves the taste and color of the consecrated bread existing independently from its underlying essence, the body of Christ.

According to Hobbes, the limitless ambitions of the clergy are largely responsible for the outbreak of the Civil War. Instead of calming and educating the people, priests and vicars only stimulated their idolatrous and hence potentially seditious inclinations, based on a massive reification of what are merely figments of the mind. Herein lies the reason why Hobbes goes to such great lengths in combating the scholastic doctrine of perception and imagination, replacing it with his mechanistic alternative. His natural philosophy helps separate fact from fiction and in the end encourages citizens to be 'much more fitted than they are for civil obedience'.⁸² Enlightened people will no longer be dominated by irrational fears and illusory hopes that make them easy victims of clerical ambitions. Instead they will be led only by the rational fear of rule of law, which will provide true stability in the commonwealth. In that sense Hobbes clearly had a pre-Enlightenment, almost Kantian, agenda. Nevertheless, liberation from clerical dominance comes at a price: the grim realization that we humans are fully part of the mechanical natural world. Unlike Kant, Hobbes does not portray us as autonomous, self-determining agents. Our minds and wills are just a tiny link in the chain of universal determinism.

NOTES

1. *OL*, I, lxxxvi–lxxxvii.
2. On the relation between modern philosophy and Aristotelianism, see R. Ariew, *Descartes and the Last Scholastics* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1995); D. Des Chene, *Physiologia. Natural Philosophy in Late Aristotelianism and Cartesian Thought* (Ithaca, Cornell University

- Press, 1996); C. Leijenhorst, *The Mechanisation of Aristotelianism. The Late Aristotelian Setting of Thomas Hobbes's Natural Philosophy* (Leiden, Brill, 2002); C. Mercer, *Leibniz's Metaphysics. Its Origins and Development* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001); T. Sorell, *The Rise of Modern Philosophy. The Tension between the New and Traditional Philosophies from Machiavelli to Leibniz* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993).
3. See C. Schmitt, Q. Skinner and E. Kessler (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992). For a survey of the rapidly growing scholarship on the late Aristotelian tradition, see the Web site maintained by Jacob Schmutz: <http://www.ulb.ac.be/philo/scholasticon>.
 4. For a survey of Aristotelian theories of sense perception, see K. Park, 'The Organic Soul', in C. Schmitt and others, *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, 464–84; A. Maier, 'Das Problem der 'Species Sensibiles in Medio' und die neue Naturphilosophie des 14. Jahrhunderts', in A. Maier, *Ausgehendes Mittelalter. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Geistesgeschichte des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1967), vol. 2, 419–51; R. Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997).
 5. Aristotle, *De Anima* III, 12, 424 a 17–20 (following the translation in J. Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984), vol. 1, 674): 'Generally, about all perception, we can say that a sense is what has the power of receiving into itself the sensible form of things without the matter, in the way in which a piece of wax takes on the impress of a signet-ring without the iron or gold'.
 6. As is well known, the notion of sensible species cannot be found in Aristotle. It was introduced by scholastic authors in order to 'bridge the physical gap between the object and the sense organ and the metaphysical gap between the sense organ and the soul' (Park, 'The Organic Soul', 471). Late Aristotelian authors increasingly questioned the existence and function of the sensible species, following earlier scholastic discussions.
 7. See Aristotle, *De Anima* III, 2, 426 a 15–19.
 8. Aristotle, *De Anima* II, 5, 418 a 3–6.
 9. On the doctrine of animal spirits, see M. Fattori and M. Bianchi, *Spiritus* (Rome, Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1984).
 10. On the internal senses, see E. Mahoney, 'Sense, Intellect and Imagination in Albert, Thomas, and Siger', in N. Kretzmann (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982), 602–22.

11. On the scholastic doctrine of *sensus communis*, see Mahoney, 'Sense, Intellect and Imagination in Albert, Thomas, and Siger'.
12. See Fattori and Bianchi, *Phantasia*, 215.
13. Park, 'The Organic Soul', 479.
14. Park, 'The Organic Soul', 481.
15. See for example Melanchthon, *Opera quae supersunt omnia*, C. G. Bretschneider (ed.), vol. 13 (*De Anima*) (Halle, Schwetschke, 1846), 121.
16. See Mahoney, 'Sense, Intellect and Imagination in Albert, Thomas, and Siger', 612–13.
17. The basis for this tripartition lies of course in Aristotle's *De Anima*, notably in passages like III, 3, 427 b 14–16 (following the translation in Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 1, 680): 'For imagination is different from either perceiving or discursive thinking, though it is not found without sensation, or judgement'.
18. *OL*, I, xxi.
19. *OL*, I, xx–xxi. This principle can be found in almost all of Hobbes's works. For an especially elegant formulation, see *Decameron Physiologicum* 2 (*EW*, VII, 83): 'For the variations of fancies, or (which is the same thing) of the phenomena of nature, have all of them one universal efficient cause, namely the variety of motion. For if all things in the world were absolutely at rest, there could be no variety of fancy; but living creatures would be without sense of all objects, which is little less than to be dead'.
20. On the meaning of the term 'mechanical philosophy', see A. Gabbey, 'What Was "Mechanical" about "The Mechanical Philosophy"?', in C. R. Palmerino and J. Thijssen (eds.), *The Reception of the Galilean Science of Motion in Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Dordrecht, Kluwer, 2004), 11–24.
21. *Lev.*, i, 4, 3–4/6.
22. *Lev.*, i, 4, 3–4/6.
23. The manuscript *De Motu* is sometimes still erroneously referred to as *Anti-White* (for an unsatisfactory edition of the text, see J. Jacquot and H. W. Jones (eds.), *Critique du De Mundo de Thomas White* (Paris, Vrin, 1973)), though *De Motu* was the title given to it by Hobbes himself. See K. Schuhmann, 'Hobbes dans les publications de Mersenne en 1644', *Bulletin Hobbes* 7, in *Archives de Philosophie* 58 (1995), 2–7.
24. See *Lev.*, i, 4, 3–4/7 ('for motion produceth nothing but motion').
25. *DCo*, XXV, 2 (*OL*, I, 317). Throughout this chapter *De Corpore* will be referred to as *DCo*, followed by the chapter in roman numerals and the article in arabic numerals.

26. For a full discussion see C. Leijenhorst, 'Hobbes and the Galilean Law of Free Fall', in Palmerino and Thijssen, *The Reception of the Galilean Science of Motion in Seventeenth-Century Europe*, 165–84.
27. *EW*, I, 206; *DCo*, XV, 2 (*OL*, I, 177): 'Definiemus conatum esse motum per spatium et tempus minus quam quod datur, id est, determinatur sive expositione vel numero assignatur, id est, per punctum et in instanti'.
28. J. Bernhardt, *Thomas Hobbes. Court Traité des Premiers Principes. Le Short Tract on First Principles de 1630–1631* (Paris, PUF, 1988), Section 2, Conclusion 8, 34. According to Noel Malcolm, 'Robert Payne, the Hobbes Manuscripts, and the "Short Tract"', in Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2002), 80–145, the "Short Tract" is not by Hobbes. In my view, his arguments have been effectively countered by Frank Horstmann, *Nachträge zu Betrachtungen über Hobbes' Optik* [Ph.D. Dissertation, Utrecht, 2004, 327–452].
29. See *DCo*, XXVIII, 5 (*OL*, I, 383).
30. J. Zabarella, *De rebus naturalibus (De Sensu Agente)*, (Frankfort, 1607; Reprint Frankfort, Minerva, 1966), chapter 9, 852: 'Neque obiectum, neque eius species est causa effectrix visionis'.
31. Zabarella, *De rebus naturalibus (De Sensu Agente)*, chapter 10, 854: 'Recepta igitur in oculo coloris specie, cuius effectrix causa est color materialis externus, emanat ab ipsa natura animae ut in sua substantia imbibat illam speciem et fiat spiritualiter color ille, quem sentire dicitur. Hoc modo anima est sensionis causa effectrix per emanationem et haec operatio emanat ab anima'.
32. J. Barnouw, 'Hobbes's Causal Account of Sensation', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 18 (1980), 115–30, here 116. Same view in J. Barnouw, 'Hobbes's Psychology of Thought: Endeavours, Purpose and Curiosity', *History of European Ideas* 10 (1989), 519–45. Here Barnouw defends the view that according to Hobbes, 'Psychological endeavors and the motions compounded from them are not like physical motion, proceeding from an initial impact, but are intrinsically oriented to an end'. (Barnouw, 'Hobbes's Psychology of Thought: Endeavours, Purpose and Curiosity', 531.) What Barnouw overlooks is that Hobbes reduces all final causality to efficient causality (i.e., physical motion; see *DCo*, X, 7; *OL*, I, 117).
33. Additionally, Barnouw wrongly claims that Hobbes's term 'conatus' or 'endeavour' first occurs in a psychological context and is only later transposed to a mechanical context (J. Barnouw, 'Le vocabulaire du *conatus*', in Y. Ch. Zarka (ed.), *Hobbes et son vocabulaire* (Paris, Vrin, 1992), 103–24, here 115). For a refutation of this claim, see Leijenhorst, *The Mechanisation of Aristotelianism*, 199.

34. See A. C. Crombie, 'The Primary Properties and Secondary Qualities in Galileo Galilei's Natural Philosophy', in Crombie, *Science, Optics and Music in Medieval and Early Modern Thought* (London, Hambledon Press, 1990), 323–43, here 329–30.
35. *Lev.*, i, 4, 3–4/7.
36. *Lev.*, i, 4, 3–4/7.
37. *Elements of Law* (EW, IV, 4).
38. See Descartes, *Dioptrique*, in C. Adam and Tannery (eds.), *Oeuvres de Descartes* (Paris, Vrin, 1973), vol. 6, chapter 1, 85.
39. *DCo*, V, 4 (OL, I, 52).
40. *Elements of Law* (EW, IV, 4).
41. J. Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. H. Nidditch (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975), book 1, chapter 8, 135.
42. Tom Sorrell, *Hobbes* (London, Routledge, 1986), 79.
43. *Lev.*, i, 4, 3–4/7.
44. *Lev.*, i, 4, 3–4/7.
45. G. Berkeley, *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, in A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop (eds.), *The Works of George Berkeley* (London, Nelson, 1949), 188–9.
46. *Lev.*, i, 2, 3–4/6.
47. See *DCo*, IX, 9 (OL, I, 111–112) and *DCo*, XXV, 2 (OL, I, 317).
48. L. Rudder Baker, *Explaining Attitudes* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), 158.
49. On the principle of inertia and Hobbes's formulation of it, see Leijenhorst, *The Mechanisation of Aristotelianism*, 192–4.
50. *Lev.*, ii, 1, 4–6/8.
51. See Leijenhorst, *The Mechanisation of Aristotelianism*, 8.
52. *Lev.*, ii, 1, 3–4/7.
53. *Lev.*, ii, 2, 4–6/8.
54. *Lev.*, ii, 2, 4–6/8.
55. *Lev.*, ii, 3, 4–6/8.
56. *Lev.*, ii, 3, 4–6/8.
57. *Lev.*, ii, 3, 4–6/9.
58. *Lev.*, ii, 10, 6–8/11.
59. On Aristotle's doctrine of *phantasia*, see M. Schofield, 'Aristotle on the Imagination', in G. E. R. Lloyd and G. E. L. Owen (eds.), *Aristotle on Mind and the Senses. Proceedings of the Seventh Symposium Aristotelicum* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978), 99–140, and M. V. Wedin, *Mind and Imagination in Aristotle* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1988).
60. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I, 11, 1370 a 28–29 (following the translation in Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, 2181).

61. Aristotle, *On Dreams*, I, 459 a 28–35; *On Divination in Sleep*, 2, 464 a 6–8.
62. Aristotle, *On Dreams*, 3, 460 b 32–a 3.
63. *Lev.*, ii, 9, 6–8/11.
64. See *DCo*, V, 9 (*OL*, I, 54). See also *De Motu*, in J. Jacquot and H. W. Jones (eds.), *Critique du De Mundo de Thomas White*, 126: 'When we therefore say that a certain thing is in the intellect, it is the same as saying that the image of that thing is in the soul, but invoked by its name, and that consequently it is the same for a thing to be in the intellect and to be an imagined thing' (translation CL).
65. See *DCo*, II, 9 (*OL*, I, 18).
66. Here, we will not go into Hobbes extreme nominalism. For a discussion, see C. Leijenhorst, '"Insignificant Speech": Thomas Hobbes and Late Aristotelianism on Words, Concepts and Things', in E. Kessler and I. Maclean (eds.), *Res et Verba in der Renaissance* (Wiesbaden, Harrasowitz, 2002), 337–68.
67. Hobbes's notion of *phantasma* has a number of sources, including optical manuals such as the one by Witelo, who speaks of *phantasma* as visual illusion (see J. Prins, 'Kepler, Hobbes and Medieval Optics', *Philosophia Naturalis* 24 (1987), 287–310, here 304). A comprehensive survey of all possible sources of Hobbes's notion of *phantasma* is still a *desideratum*, though an important step has been taken by Y. Ch. Zarka, 'le vocabulaire de l'apparaître: le champ sémantique de la notion de *Phantasma*', in Y. Ch. Zarka (ed.), *Hobbes et son vocabulaire* (Paris, Vrin, 1992).
68. J. L. Stocks, *Aristotelianism* (London, George G. Harrap & Co Ltd., 1924), 138–9. Similar claim in E. Wallace, *Aristotle's Psychology* (Cambridge, 1882; Reprint New York, Arno Press, 1976), lxxxvii.
69. On the relation between Hobbes and the Italian naturalists, see Leijenhorst, *The Mechanisation of Aristotelianism*, 95–7.
70. *DCo*, XXV, 1 (*OL*, I, 316).
71. For an interesting account of this issue, see Sorell, *Hobbes*, 1–28.
72. *Lev.*, xlvi, 18, 372–4/460.
73. *Lev.*, ii, 7, 6–8/10.
74. *Lev.*, ii, 7, 6–8/10.
75. For an extensive discussion of Hobbes's rejection of substantial forms, see Leijenhorst, *The Mechanisation of Aristotelianism*, 163–5.
76. *Lev.*, iii, 12, 10–12/15.
77. *Lev.*, xxiv, 2, 207–9/262: 'And according to this acceptation of the word, *substance* and *body* signify the same thing; and therefore *substance incorporeal* are words which, when they are joined together, destroy one another, as if a man should say an *incorporeal body*'.

78. See *Lev.*, xlv, 17, 370–2/459–60.
79. See *Lev.*, xlv, 17, 370–2/459–60.
80. See *Lev.*, xxix, 8, 168–70/212 for Hobbes's rejection of Calvinist 'enthusiasm', the idea that *'faith and sanctity are not to be attained by Study and Reason, but by supernatural inspiration or infusion'*, by which man could claim to have direct access to God's will.
81. See *Lev.*, xlv, 18, 372–4/460.
82. *Lev.*, ii, 8, 6–8/11.

4 Hobbes on the Natural Condition of Mankind

Political orders are kept secure not only by means of distance from what would destroy them, but sometimes by means of proximity thereto: for when the citizens are afraid, they hold firmly to the political order. Therefore those who think on behalf of the political order must contrive causes of fear, that the citizens may be on guard and like sentries at night not relax their watch; and they must make what is distant appear to be at hand.

Aristotle, *Politics* 1308a24–30

I

It is natural to reflect on human nature and the nature of political society by speculating about how humans were or would be outside of such society. In writing the first part of his *Leviathan*, 'Of Man', and looking forward to the second, 'Of Commonwealth', Hobbes includes a chapter 'Of the *NATURAL CONDITION* of *MANKIND*, As Concerning Their Felicity, and Misery'. He famously determines that in such a condition there is much misery, and precious little felicity.

The first part of *Leviathan* is devoted to the question of human nature, and although there are scattered references to people's reactions to one another, it is not until chapter xiii that Hobbes systematically reflects on how the human beings he has been describing would interact. Although it is generally regarded as the starting point of his political theory, Hobbes places his account of the natural condition (along with his analyses of the law of nature and personation, both of which have some place in the natural condition) squarely in

his theory of man. This is brought out by Hobbes's reference in *Leviathan* to 'the natural condition of mankind' rather than 'the state of nature'.

Hobbes asserts in this chapter that men are by nature roughly equal in their mental and physical capacities. The inequalities that do exist do not result in a stable hierarchy, because the stronger are still highly vulnerable to the weaker, those who are weaker in one respect may be stronger in another, and there are few if any who consider themselves essentially inferior. The natural condition is thus one in which people have equal hope of attaining what they desire. Because they often desire the same thing, while not recognizing anyone's exclusive claim to it, they try to subdue or destroy each other if their desire or perceived need for it is great enough. Nor can one opt out of this situation and cultivate what one wants for oneself, for this will encourage others to come to take it away for gain or for glory, with the possible outcome of servitude or death. Facing such a prospect, one will 'anticipate', attacking the other rather than waiting to be attacked. The best strategy to obtain security is to master as many others as one can; but because this is true for everyone, the ensuing situation will be one in which each is prepared to attempt to conquer each other.

Even if people could congregate without hostile competition for scarce goods, they are concerned for reputation and prone to be at one another's throats as soon as they feel insulted. Hobbes concludes that the natural condition is a war of all against all, for every person is disposed to fight every other, and there is no established authority to prevent them from acting on this disposition. Conflict will ensue, for some people will try to conquer for reputation and others for gain; and the possibility of such aggression will prompt still others to try to subdue possible aggressors in order to protect themselves. This general condition of enmity precludes the security and stability necessary to develop arts, letters, engineering, and durable collective enterprises; everyone lives in 'continual fear and danger of violent death', and the life of natural man is 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short'.¹

To bolster the idea that such a condition of war is natural to man, Hobbes points out that even when we have the stability and security provided by laws and a system to punish those who infringe them, we confirm his analysis by distrusting our fellow citizens – by locking

our doors and taking other measures against theft and attack. To persuade those who would question the very existence of this condition of war, Hobbes adduces three examples of such a condition (adding in the Latin *Leviathan* the instance of Cain's murder of Abel): 'the savage people' in many places of America at the time he was writing; the manner of life in which men find themselves in civil war; and the gladiatorial posture of sovereigns toward one another.² In later passages, he treats any division of sovereignty as tantamount to this conflict between sovereigns or would-be sovereigns; anything short of unified and absolute sovereignty is, or at least threatens quickly to become, a state of war.

In this condition of enmity there is no common or overarching power, and therefore there is no law. Without law, there is no property, but only *de facto* possession; nor is there justice or injustice, understood as obedience to or infringement of law. In one of his more famous and more Machiavellian phrases, Hobbes declares that 'Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues'.³ Although nature places us in this condition of war, this does not mean we must remain there. For nature also supplies us with passions (fear of death, desire for the goods to live well, and the hope to attain those goods) that incline us to peace if it can be had. And reason suggests that peace may be obtained by following the rules of self-preservation that Hobbes calls the laws of nature. So runs chapter xiii.

II

Readers of Hobbes's account of the natural condition of mankind would have been struck by how different it was from the prevailing contemporary view. According to the orthodox portrayal, in his natural condition man was as created by God and before his corruption by Adam's sin. Many believed that by converting to Christ they would regain this state: because '*Nature is of it self excellent*', John Saltmarsh assures us, conversion brings us to 'a more *purely natural* condition'.⁴ To put it in scholastic terms, man's natural condition is that which accords with his natural *telos* or end.⁵ There could hardly be a more dramatic contrast to this portrait of prelapsarian harmony or subsequent salvation than the account Hobbes provides. Contemporaries accused him of impiety, thinking it an affront to God to say that he had placed human beings in such a condition of misery – an

affront they thought was exacerbated by the position that redemption from this condition was to be found without appeal to him. Such accusations may have encouraged Hobbes to alter the title of the chapter in the Latin *Leviathan* to 'Of the Condition of Humankind insofar as it concerns the felicity of the present life'.⁶

Hobbes has more in common with another important tradition of biblical interpretation, in which the natural condition of man is asserted to be that of his *corrupt* nature. In this Augustinian tradition, marked by a sharp division between those who are and who are not saved, man in his natural state is not opposed to man in his fallen state, but to man in the state of grace. A clear exposition of this view is provided by Christopher Love in his sermons of 1646.⁷ Writing in the midst of the disorder of war, Love observes that 'Order is the staffe of a Commonwealth, if every man might doe what he list, and what is right in his own eyes, nothing but ruine and destruction would presently follow. . . . If the Laws and foundations of a Commonwealth be subverted and destroyed, there will be nothing but ruine'.⁸ Drawing on Ephesians 2:12, Love sees a parallel between this lawless situation of private judgement and 'the state of *Nature*', or 'Men in their naturall condition' who are '*by nature children of wrath*'.⁹ 'Man in the state of *Nature*' is 'without *Christ*, and an Alien from the Common-wealth of Israel, and a stranger to the Covenants of promise'.¹⁰

As Love points out, Paul does not address this description to the unconverted, but to the converted Ephesians, to have them 'remember, that they were men without Christ, and aliens to the Commonwealth of Israel', and to warn them of the manifold 'miseries, and afflictions, and sufferings' that they will meet if they relapse.¹¹ 'God wil have us cal to minde our former sinfulnessse, because this wil make us more watchful and circumspect, that we do not run again into those sins that we were guilty of before conversion'.¹² For Hobbes, too, the natural condition lacks law and commonwealth, and is a condition of misery analogous to that of damnation.¹³ The Hobbesian natural condition is not one of primitive perfection, but of the misery and conflict that attend all those who have not yet been converted to the cause of commonwealth. And like Paul's purpose in painting a dark picture for the Ephesians, Hobbes's primary aim in providing his portrait of natural misery is to frighten his readers into holding firmly to the order already established over them.

Hobbes writes less to persuade the apolitical to institute commonwealth than to exhort those who are already citizens to a punctilious obedience. Salvation is already theirs; they need only embrace it.

Hobbes reveals a contemporary source of inspiration for his understanding of the natural condition when he refers to 'the savage people in many places of *America*'.¹⁴ Europeans thought that in America they had found humanity in a more natural and less civilized state. On the illustrated title-page of his *De Cive*, Hobbes draws on this idea, and on the iconographical tradition of contrasting America with Europa as ideal female types. In his turn, Hobbes represents the condition of liberty as a glum native in a feather skirt standing against a backdrop of primitive warfare, and the condition of rule as a serene monarch in rich robes standing against a backdrop of tranquil prosperity. In the earlier works, pictures of Americans had sometimes been counterposed with those of primitive Europeans, to make the point that in observing the Americans the Europeans behold a near likeness of how they were – 'for to shoue', as one of them puts it, 'how that the Inhabitants of the great Brettanie haue bin in times past as sauuage as those of Uirginia'.¹⁵ Some elements of Hobbes's description of the natural condition can be traced back to early anthropological accounts of the Americans. Most strikingly, his famous litany of what that condition lacks ('there is no place for industry, . . . no culture of the earth, no navigation . . . , no account of time, no arts, no letters, no society') is an adaptation of a hyperbolic trope, characterizing uncivilized peoples by a negative list, which became conventional in the century after Columbus landed.¹⁶

There are ancient precedents, too, for Hobbes's remarkably dark picture of natural man, for a number of classical writers (and their commentators) rejected the tradition of a primitive Golden Age.¹⁷ So Lucretius describes a time when men lived much like solitary animals, without fire or clothes or houses, without agriculture or navigation, without law or government.¹⁸ While Lucretius also notes the freedom of primitive humanity from the perils that come with civilized commonwealth, his emphasis is on the privations and dangers of the prepolitical condition. They would not have survived, Lucretius says, if they had not learned to make compacts of mutual advantage.¹⁹

Another locus of ideas about the nature of primitive humanity was the series of accounts by writers who sought to prove the importance

of a particular art by considering the human race without it.²⁰ The initial form of this claim (later reasserted by Aristophanes, Suetonius, and Horace) was probably on behalf of poetry. Without poetry, its proponents maintain, humans were in a desperate fight for mere survival, and without any of the benefits of civilization.²¹ Rhetoricians retorted that it was rhetoric that had saved humanity from dire need, a wise leader persuading the dispersed people to leave their savagery behind by keeping agreements and obeying laws.²² Sophists and philosophers pressed a similar claim. Protagoras, according to Plato, usurped the accomplishments of the poets and others, saying that Homer, Hesiod, Simonides, and their like brought about civilization by practising the sophistic art in disguise; and Seneca makes a related claim for philosophy.²³ Hobbes follows this tradition, writing in *De Corpore* that it is due to philosophy that we have architecture, navigation, geography, engineering, and so on; and that without civil philosophy in particular we would be in a situation of complete want, solitude, and slaughter.²⁴

Hobbes distinguishes himself from most of the preceding thinkers when he makes clear that the natural condition is not simply to be identified with an original or primitive condition. He even admits that Adam exercised paternal government.²⁵ We are in the natural condition whenever we are without the artifice of commonwealth, whether before it is set up or after it breaks down. Civil war might better be described as a postpolitical condition than a prepolitical one; and that the relation between sovereigns is a condition of war implies that the natural condition may coexist with commonwealth, for with regard to one another all commonwealths are always in such a condition. There can be no doubt that Hobbes's thought was shaped by accounts of, and by his own experience of, civil war and international conflict. But to understand his characterization of the natural condition, nothing is more important to grasp than the *logic* of conflict that follows from his view of human nature.

III

This logic of natural conflict has frequently been assimilated to the game-theoretical model of the prisoner's dilemma.²⁶ In the Hobbesian natural condition, everyone would be better off if they were all to refrain from attacking one another; but because the risks for each

individual of not attacking outweigh those of attacking, they all end up attacking. What is needed is a way to change the cost-benefit matrix, making cooperation more profitable for each person than conflict. This can be seen as the role of the sovereign, who sets a stiff punishment for attacking or otherwise disobeying, and so enables covenant-keeping and peace.

This model of the natural condition may be too simple. If there are repeated interactions between the same individuals, for example, the proper model may be an iterated prisoner's dilemma rather than a one-shot prisoner's dilemma. And if we have repeated encounters, it may be sensible to adopt a strategy of tit-for-tat, and to be prepared to cooperate initially in the hopes that the other may also foresee a series of interactions and thus consider the same strategy. If others are similarly disposed, a kind of reciprocal altruism could arise as the best way to ensure one's self-interest in the long run. The problem for Hobbes's theory would be that we would thus develop cooperation without having to institute sovereignty. Interactions in the natural condition, however, are unlikely to encourage such behaviour. For reciprocal altruism to develop, the initial interactions must be low risk, rather than situations that may well be a matter of killing or being killed. But because of the uncertainty and threat that each person poses to each other, and because debilitating or eliminating another may significantly decrease one's future risk, initial interactions in the natural condition as depicted by Hobbes are unlikely to be low risk. Iteration itself will not be reliable, for the dilemma may never recur with the same people, especially when lives are at stake: and if there is a high enough chance that a dilemma will not be iterated (or that the other may think that there is a high enough chance that it will not be), then it will become rational to treat it more like a one-shot dilemma. Similarly, the benefits that would accrue from iteration in an assurance game (in which one tries to convince the other to cooperate by cooperating) will not look likely enough to encourage reassuring behaviour. Without a general assurance of nonaggression, Hobbes says, one who moves unilaterally to bring about peace will instead merely expose himself as prey.²⁷

Hobbes's emphasis on the role of the passions in the natural condition may be thought to vitiate any analysis in terms of the strategies of rational choosers. He says in *De Cive* that the natural

condition is the domain of passion, whereas civil society is the domain of reason; and in *Leviathan* he claims that he has shown in chapter xiii that 'that miserable condition of war . . . is necessarily consequent . . . to the natural passions of men' without sovereignty.²⁸ On the other hand, Hobbes indicates that the logic of anticipation that leads to the condition of war is a *reasonable* strategy for pursuing security.²⁹ He wants to show that even with natural reason, and even if many or most humans have moderate aims, war will ensue nonetheless. A rational choice model can in any case proceed instrumentally, taking as rational that which appears to further one's aims, regardless of whether those aims are based on passions or something else. The common pitfall of assimilating Hobbes to such models remains that of simplifying his account by setting aside those elements that do not fit.

Hobbes says that the three principal causes of quarrel to be found when we consider the nature of man are competition, diffidence, and glory.³⁰ Conflict may arise from passion (desire for what another has or wants, fear of attack, pride in conquest), and may be exacerbated by natural reason or prudence (the other is likely to attack me from one of these motives; therefore, I should attack first to obtain the first-mover's advantage). That Hobbes offers three different motives that would make the natural condition one of war may be seen as a strength of the theory, rather than a lack of economy. For it allows for greater human diversity than would reliance on a single motive, and it overdetermines the result. Many preceding theories of human nature had taken one or another of these features to be dominant: man was basically naturally competitive, or timorous, or proud. Hobbes shows that according to any such view, conflict will ensue; moreover, if the population consists of some who primarily seek glory, others who primarily seek gain, and others who primarily seek safety, they will be prone to end up in a condition of conflict all the more rapidly (because the timorous, for instance, will have more reason to fear depredation and so will be more likely to anticipate). That Hobbes includes the three causes of conflict, and allows for others (for these are the three 'principal' causes), tells us something about the status of his model. It is not meant to show how conflict may be generated from the most parsimonious assumptions; rather, it is supposed to reflect a range of characteristics that are sufficiently widely shared as to show the relevance of the conclusion. Hobbes is content

to bracket some considerations as what we might call statistically insignificant: for example, in making his case for the natural equality of the faculties of mind, he sets aside science, 'which very few have, and but in few things'; and he holds that we must assume that people keep covenants from fear rather than 'a generosity too rarely found to be presumed on'.³¹ The argument from the natural condition is supposed to proceed from premises that are true generally but not universally.

IV

If the natural condition is based on a general and multivalent view of human nature, this casts doubt on the common view that it is a kind of theoretical limit case. Does Hobbes think that the natural condition of war of all against all ever did or could exist? His readers have long denied it; but if the scenario is unreal, it is hard to see how it is supposed to be pertinent, and more particularly how it can tell us anything about the nature of our obligations. Some have accordingly treated the natural condition as the grounding for a hypothetical covenant: if you *were* in this situation and you *would* therein covenant, then you *ought* to be guided, as by a regulative ideal, by the agreement you would there make.³² Even if it could be made plausible that an agreement I might have undertaken in other circumstances can obligate me as does an agreement that I do undertake in my actual circumstances, there is little evidence that Hobbes thought it was plausible.

To determine whether the natural condition itself is real or ideal, it would be helpful to know whether Hobbes thought of the examples he gives as *instantiations* of the natural condition or as *illustrations* or approximations of such a condition. To the objection that there has never been such a natural condition of war of all against all, he retorts: 'What? Did Cain not kill his brother Abel out of envy, so great a misdeed that he would not have dared it, had there then stood over him a common power that could have punished him?'³³ Hobbes believes that although 'it was never generally so, over all the world' that people lived in this condition, 'there are many places where they live so now'.³⁴ He provides an example with a problematic caveat: 'For the savage people in many places of *America* (except the government of small families, the concord whereof dependeth on natural

lust) have no government at all'.³⁵ On the one hand, this exception is in tension with the argument in chapter xvii that people cannot be bound together in any kind of government by natural concord.³⁶ On the other, it presents a dilemma: either the natural condition ceases when there are small families, in which case the example appears to fail and a doubt arises about whether a significant number of individuals could find themselves in such a condition; or there can be small families in the natural condition, in which case that condition is not one of a war of each individual against each other. Hobbes does not take a consistent position on this issue: sometimes he talks of families in the natural condition, sometimes he says that where there is familial authority there is no natural condition, and sometimes he says that a family is a commonwealth if and only if it is sufficiently large.

The two subsequent examples are even more remote from a war among individuals. First, Hobbes says that 'it may be perceived what manner of life there would be where there were no common power to fear, by the manner of life which men . . . use to degenerate into, in a civil war'.³⁷ Although it is possible that Hobbes means this only as an illustration ('it may be perceived' herefrom what life in the natural condition would be like), references elsewhere suggest that he thinks that in both this and the next case, that of international relations, there is a genuine condition of war.³⁸ If so, the dilemma recurs. In the international scene, conflict will generally be between even larger groups. Yet there is a way of thinking of the conflict as interpersonal, and indeed Hobbes describes this 'condition of war' as that between independent 'kings and persons of sovereign authority', who are always 'in the state and posture of gladiators'.³⁹ And in chapter xvi, Hobbes explains how, like lesser corporate bodies, the commonwealth itself can be understood as united in one person. This raises a crucial disanalogy, however, with the 'war of every man against every man': Hobbes is explicit that the aggressive stance of sovereigns toward one another is for the good of their subjects, and that 'there does not follow from it that misery which accompanies the liberty of particular men'.⁴⁰ This kind of natural condition, therefore, is not so miserable, and we need not even seek to escape it. And no wonder, for sovereignty, despite implying hostility to other sovereign states, is what Hobbes recommends as the way *out* of the natural condition of war.

If warring families, civil wars, and international relations are natural conditions, as Hobbes suggests, then we can put to rest one of the most enduring objections to his theory. This is that because the natural condition is one of isolated individuals locked in warfare with one another, there is therefore no community in which language could arise; and because language is necessary for covenants, there can be no way to covenant out of the natural condition (contrary to Hobbes's theory). One of several weak points to this objection is that language could arise in the aforementioned groups of families, factions, or states. And even if we set these aside, there is still the possibility of linguistic community among the conquest and defence groups that Hobbes treats as integral to the natural condition of war.⁴¹ Not least, those in a post-political natural condition will have language.

Montesquieu and Rousseau mount the influential related criticism that the portrait Hobbes purports to provide of natural man instead represents socialized man, and that the miseries he describes are those of human society rather than of the natural condition.⁴² The crucial case is that of glory, one of the principal causes of conflict, for the pursuit of glory is arguably born as a social desire.⁴³ This would present a problem if Hobbes means to prohibit all society in the natural condition. In the most extreme sentence of his characterization of the natural condition he does say that there are 'no arts, no letters, no society',⁴⁴ but there are many indications that society may be found there. Hobbes's inclusion of glory as a source of quarrel is itself an indication that he allows social forces in the natural condition, and such forces would apparently accompany the groups mentioned. What is more, Hobbes says that of the 'three principal causes of quarrel', competition drives men to master the persons, wives, children, and cattle of others; diffidence, to defend them with violence; and glory, to attack others 'for reputation', whether of themselves or 'their kindred, their friends, their nation, their profession, or their name'.⁴⁵ As this is meant to illustrate the causes of quarrel that we find 'in the nature of man', it may be that Hobbes is not here referring to features exclusive to situations without sovereignty, but to enduring aspects of human nature that will lead to conflict both in civil society and (especially) out of it.⁴⁶ This then would resemble his attempt to show that nature renders men apt to destroy one another by appealing to the suspicion we have that others may attack or despoil us even within civil society.⁴⁷

Hobbes thinks of human nature as constant from the natural condition to civil society, though the same basic motives may lead to different actions depending on whether the situation promises reliable security.

V

It may be objected that there is a vital difference between natural and civil human beings, for only the latter are moral beings. Hobbes sometimes suggests that morality is born with commonwealth, whereas the natural condition exists beyond good and evil: 'The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, have there no place'.⁴⁸ Let us first consider the case of justice and injustice, and then turn to right and wrong.

If justice and injustice are respectively defined as obedience to and violation of civil law, then of course they will have no place where there is no such law.⁴⁹ If, however, they are defined in terms of the fulfilment or the violation of covenants, then the picture is not so clear, for sometimes Hobbes suggests that there can be covenants in the natural condition.⁵⁰ Early in chapter xv, he defines 'injustice' as violation of a covenant and 'just' as anything that is not unjust. According to this definition, *everything* in the natural condition is just (unless there can be covenants therein, in which case there can also be injustices), whereas according to the dictum from chapter xiii, *nothing* is there just or unjust. The argument in chapter xv is that 'justice is the constant will of giving to every man his own', but in the natural condition all have a right to all things, thus nothing is one's own. 'Therefore where there is no commonwealth, there nothing is unjust.' Hobbes ties this closely to his definition in terms of covenants, for what is one's own is determined by covenants.⁵¹

In treating justice as a particular law of nature, and in later characterizing it simply as obedience to the natural law, Hobbes suggests that it could have a place even where there is no civil law.⁵² So it is not surprising that he does acknowledge that there is a sense in which justice is taken to be a virtue and injustice a vice. This kind of justice is 'rarely found', Hobbes observes, and consists of 'a certain nobleness or gallantness of courage... by which a man scorns to be beholden for the contentment of his life to fraud or breach of promise'. One whose will is framed by 'apparent benefit' cannot

be just in this sense.⁵³ Even this kind of justice will make scanty appearance in the natural condition, for those few who are disposed to generosity would rarely be able to show it where the imperatives of survival are so exigent.

If right and wrong had *no* place in the natural condition, as Hobbes states in chapter xiii, then the laws of nature, which he equates with the requirements of morality, would not apply outside of commonwealth.⁵⁴ Hobbes says bluntly that in the natural condition 'every man has a right to everything, even to one another's body'.⁵⁵ In the natural condition one has a right to do whatever one thinks will conduce to self-preservation. Outside of commonwealth, there is no object or action of which one can say that the right of nature does not include it or that the law of nature prohibits it – *unless* we consider the intention as part of the action. One has the right to torture someone else in the natural condition, for example, but only if one thinks this will aid one's own preservation. 'To hurt without reason, tendeth to the introduction of war, which is against the law of nature, and is commonly styled by the name of *cruelty*.'⁵⁶ Harming another without the purpose of one's own preservation is wrong and sinful (though in the natural condition it is not, in Hobbes's usual sense, unjust).

When there is not sufficient security, one is not obliged to act according to the laws of nature.⁵⁷ This is not to say that the laws of nature do not oblige in the natural condition, for they there 'oblige *in foro interno*, that is to say, they bind to a desire they should take place'.⁵⁸ What the laws of nature oblige us to in the natural condition is 'an unfeigned and constant endeavour'.⁵⁹ 'The laws of nature are immutable and eternal', so they apply to natural as well as to civil humans.⁶⁰ But what does this amount to? Are we here seeing a neglected moralist who emphasizes the role of intentions in assessing moral character? Or are these just shrewd concessions that turn out to be limited to politically irrelevant cases? Is Hobbesian morality inaccessible and inapplicable to anyone else, and thus without a role in the civic arena?

Hobbes does harness moral evaluation in at least two ways. First, he sets up a series of arguments to show that we are morally bound to obey the sovereign power over us. Second, he argues that anyone beyond the reach of sovereign command is obligated to seek peace – the essential requirement of which is precisely the effective sway of

sovereign authority. Hobbes attempts to invert the expected values of his readers, maintaining that submission to the artifice of Leviathan is not only prudentially but also morally superior to retaining or regaining their natural liberty. Hobbes supplements his appeal to morality with arguments to show that fear and interest also dictate that we should do what is necessary to avoid the natural condition. As self-preservation is required by the moral law (and by divine law), these arguments are also meant to further the moral case for obeying the authority that provides for our security.

Placing Hobbes's stance in its contemporary context illustrates his distinctive position in the history of political thought. Richard Overton, for example, thinks it self-evident that 'by naturall birth, all men are equally and alike borne to like propriety, liberty and freedom', and that they are naturally inclined to preserve themselves; he concludes that it is reasonable and just that they protect themselves from the 'craft' and 'might' of their neighbours.⁶¹ Overton employs this position in a radical argument for enlarging the effective rights of the people and limiting the authority of the king. Robert Filmer, by contrast, attempts to shore up authority and preempt rebellion by denying the natural equality and liberty of mankind and asserting the natural authority of kings. 'Whereas if they did but confute this first erroneous principle [viz., 'the natural liberty and equality of mankind'], the main foundation of popular sedition would be taken away.'⁶²

Unlike Filmer, Hobbes insists that the natural condition is one of liberty, equality, and the most extensive individual rights imaginable. He argues, however, that these free and equal people are in a condition of utter wretchedness and insecurity – not in spite of their liberty and equality, but because of them. We clamour for liberty, for equality, or for rights without realizing that we are demanding misery and destruction. We naturally prefer felicity and self-preservation, so if Hobbes makes us realize this, he will bring us to obey, and save us from ourselves.

NOTES

1. *Lev.*, xiii, 9, 62/76.
2. *Lev.*, xiii, 10–12, 62–3/77–8.
3. *Lev.*, xiii, 13, 63/78. 'Vis & Dolus in Bello Virtutes Cardinales sunt' (p. 65 of *Leviathan*..., in *Thomae Hobbes Malmesburiensis Opera*

Philosophica, Quae Latinè scripsit, Omnia (Amsterdam, 1668)); refer to Machiavelli, *Discorsi* 2.13, and Guicciardini's comments thereon. See also the opening of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, Aristotle's view that seditions are effected either by force or fraud (*Politics*, 5.4 and 5.10; cf. *Discorsi*, 2.32), and the commentaries on Aristotle (e.g., John Case, *Sphaera Civitatis* 5.4.3 and 5.4.5). Machiavelli and Hobbes are twisting an earlier view, to be found for example in Brasidas' claim that in war force is more honourable than fraud (Thucydides 4.87). See the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*: setting aside honour, advantage amounts to security, that is, the avoidance of immediate or anticipated danger by force and fraud ('vis et dolus': 3.2(3), 3.4(8)).

4. John Saltmarsh, *Free-Grace: or, The Flowings of Christs Blood freely to Sinners* (London, 1645), 178.
5. Even in the wake of Hobbes, Samuel Pufendorf feels it necessary to open his chapter on the state of natural man by clarifying that we are not to understand by this a most perfect condition in which men are in the greatest possible accord with the direction of nature (*De Jure Naturae et Gentium* (Amsterdam, 1688), 105).
6. Emphasis added: 'De Conditione generis Humani quantum attinet ad felicitatem praesentis vitae'.
7. Christopher Love, *The Naturall Mans Case stated, or An Exact Map of the Little World Man, Considered in both his Capacities, Either in the state of Nature, or Grace*, 2nd edn (London, 1652) (on p. 110 of this posthumously published work, Love says that the war has been going on for four years). See also Saltmarsh, *Free-Grace*, 1–5. The difference of interpretation is sometimes narrowly about which state counts as the natural condition, rather than over central tenets of the doctrine of salvation or the Fall.
8. Love, *The Naturall Mans Case stated*, 109.
9. Love, *The Naturall Mans Case stated*, 1, 2, 3.
10. Love, *The Naturall Mans Case stated*, 3, 4. See Nicholas Smyth, *A Description of the Natural Condition of Being in the flesh* (n.p., 1657), for example, 4: 'the natural man is not . . . subject to the law of God'.
11. Love, *The Naturall Mans Case stated*, 5, 54.
12. Love, *The Naturall Mans Case stated*, 14.
13. The parallel is vividly illustrated on the title page of the 1642 *De Cive*.
14. *Lev.*, xiii, 11, 63/77.
15. Theodor de Bry (ed.), *A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia, of the commodities and of the nature and manners of the naturall inhabitants* (Frankfurt, 1590); quotation from the title-page of the section on the Picts. See Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, xiv, 12 and *De Cive*, i, 13.

16. *Lev.*, xiii, 9, 62/76. Earlier parallels abound, including passages in Le Roy, Montaigne, Shakespeare, and Purchas (Margaret T. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), esp. 194–201, 377–8; see also the examples given by Giuliano Gliozzi, *Adamo e il nuovo mondo. La nascita dell'antropologia come ideologia coloniale: dalle genealogie bibliche alle teorie razziali (1500–1700)* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1977), 305–6 n 64, 379, 411–12).
17. Proponents of the view of an original Golden Age include Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 109–201; Empedocles, fr. 128, 130; and Plato, *Statesman*, 271d3–272b4.
18. Lucretius 5.925–1027. See Diodorus Siculus 1.8; Vergil, *Aeneid* 8.314–18; and Horace, *Satires* 1.3, 99–106 (where Horace adds that unlike the distinction between objects of desire and aversion, that between justice and injustice has no place in nature). Hobbes shows his familiarity with this kind of account in the opening section of his *De Corpore* (I, i, 1), which was finally published in 1655.
19. Lucretius 5.1019–27. In these lines, Lucretius draws directly on Epicurus, who had said that 'justice is nothing on its own, but whenever and wherever people interact with one another it is a kind of compact not to harm or be harmed' (*Kuriai Doxai* 33; cf. 31, 32, and 36, and Plato, *Republic*, 2.358e3–359b5). See *Lev.*, xiii, 13, 63/78: 'Justice and injustice are none of the faculties neither of the body, nor mind. If they were, they might be in a man that were alone in the world. . . . They are qualities that relate to men in society, not in solitude.' Clarendon, for one, thinks that Hobbes has taken his ideas of the natural condition and the invention of government from 'the Fancy and Supposition of Heathen Philosophers', particularly the Epicureans ('Of Liberty' (1670), in *The Miscellaneous Works of the Right Honourable Edward, Earl of Clarendon . . . Being a Collection of Several Valuable Tracts . . .*, 2nd edn (London, 1751), 143).
20. On this theme, see Felix Heinimann, 'Eine vorplatonische Theorie der τέχνη', *Museum Helveticum* 18 (1961).
21. Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 1030–6; Suetonius, *De Poetis*, fragment (probably from the proem) quoted in Isidore of Seville, *Etymologia*, 8.7.1–2; Horace, *Art of Poetry*, 391–407.
22. Cicero, *De Inventione*, I, ii, 2–3; see Isocrates 3 (*Nicocles or the Cyprians*), 5–7, and Cicero, *De Oratore*, I, viii, 33.
23. Plato, *Protagoras*, 316d3–9; Seneca, *Epistles*, 90.
24. *De Corpore*, I, i, 7. Hobbes also expresses this view in *A Discourse upon Gondibert* (Paris, 1650), which he wrote while composing *Leviathan* (132). In the epistle to *De Corpore*, Hobbes claims that civil science is

no older than his *De Cive*; but then how can we account for the many commonwealths that antedated it? Hobbes's answer is that all such commonwealths were fragile and prone to sedition. This is broadly consistent with the account Hobbes found in Thucydides of early times, when shifting alliances were formed for conquest and defence, and aggression and plunder were accepted ways of life. But he may have to confess either that some measure of civil security can exist without civil philosophy, or that there has been some approximation of civil science in the past.

25. *The Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance*, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, ed. Sir William Molesworth (London: John Bohn, 1839–45), 5:184. See *The Elements of Law*, xxiv, 3, and *De Cive*, x, 3.
26. Related topics are treated by David P. Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan: The Moral and Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); Gregory S. Kavka, *Hobbesian Moral and Political Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); and Jean Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
27. *Lev.*, xiv, 5, 65/80.
28. *De Cive*, x, 1 (cf. i, 12; vii, 18; and *Lev.*, xiv, 18, 68/84–5; *Lev.*, xvii, 1, 85/106). See *Lev.*, xiii, 10, 62/77, where the conclusion that the natural condition must be one of warfare is an 'inference made from the passions'.
29. *Lev.*, xiii, 4, 61/75; note too that at xiii, 14, 63/78, Hobbes specifies passions that incline men to *obedience* (cf. xi, 4–5, 48/58).
30. *Lev.*, xiii, 6, 61/76.
31. *Lev.*, xiii, 2, 60/74; xiv, 31, 70/87 (cf. xxvii, 19, 155/196).
32. For a sophisticated construal along these lines, see Kavka, *Hobbesian Moral and Political Theory*.
33. 'Quid, nonne fratrem suam Abelem invidiâ interfecit Cain, tantum facinus non ausurus, si communis potentia quae vindicare potuisset tunc extitisset?' (1668 edn of the Latin *Leviathan*, 65). That no one would attempt such a terrible undertaking if there were a sovereign authority to punish is false unless idealizing assumptions are made about the efficacy of the authority and the psychology of the citizen; and in any case, Genesis suggests that there was an authority with the right to punish. Cain was arguably under the rule of Adam (especially given Hobbes's reading of family relations in the natural condition), and God swiftly punished him. Hobbes's invocation of Cain may have been prompted by the chorus of critics of *De Cive* and the English *Leviathan* who complained that his view of primitive humanity was inconsistent with the

Bible. While the example is an effective rejoinder to those who assumed that the scholastic doctrine of natural sociability sat easily with Genesis, it also calls into question the orthodoxy of the position (usually attributed to Hobbes) that humans are without political authority until they create it.

34. *Lev.*, xiii, 11, 63/77.
35. *Lev.*, xiii, 11, 63/77.
36. See *Lev.*, xvii, 12–13, 87/109.
37. *Lev.*, xiii, 11, 63/77.
38. See, for example, *De Cive*, xiii, 7, 13; *Lev.*, xviii, 20, 94/117; xix, 11, 98/123; xlii, 125, 316/393; *De Corpore*, I, i, 7.
39. *Lev.*, xiii, 12, 63/78.
40. *Lev.*, xiii, 13, 63/78; xiii, 12, 63/78.
41. See *Lev.*, xiii, 1, 60/74; xiii, 3–4, 61/75; xiii, 7, 62/76.
42. See Montesquieu, *De l'Esprit des Loix* (Geneva, [1748]), 1.2, 6–7; *The Political Writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau*, ed. C. E. Vaughan, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915), 140–1, 159–60 (*Discours sur l'inégalité*), 293–307 (*Que l'état de guerre naît de l'état social*, Neuchâtel MS 7856), and 453–4 (*Contrat social*, Geneva MS français 225).
43. In *Lev.*, vi, 39, 26–7/31, however, Hobbes says that whereas vainglory is grounded only on fantasy or the flattery of others, glory may be grounded on the experience of one's own former actions. According to this definition, glory does not necessarily depend on social recognition.
44. *Lev.*, xiii, 9, 62/76.
45. *Lev.*, xiii, 7, 62/76.
46. *Lev.*, xiii, 6, 61/76.
47. *Lev.*, xiii, 10, 62/77.
48. *Lev.*, xiii, 13, 63/78.
49. See *Lev.*, iv, 8, 14/17–18; xiii, 13, 63/78; xxvi, 4, 137/173; xxx, 20, 181–2/229.
50. For this definition, see *Lev.*, xv, 2, 71/89. For covenants in the natural condition, see *Lev.*, xiv, 27, 69/86; xiv, 31, 70–1/87–8; xx, 4, 103/128–9; xxii, 29, 122/153.
51. *Lev.*, xv, 3, 71–2/89 (italicization altered).
52. *Lev.*, xv, 1–15, 71–5/89–95; xv, 39, 79/100.
53. *Lev.*, xv, 10, 74/93.
54. Hobbes goes on to talk only about justice and injustice, as we have seen (*Lev.*, xv, 2–3, 71–2/89), and in the Latin version he drops the claim about there being no right and wrong in the natural condition.
55. *Lev.*, xiv, 4, 64/80.
56. *Lev.*, xv, 19, 76/96.

- 57. *Lev.*, xv, 36, 79/99.
- 58. *Lev.*, xv, 36, 79/99.
- 59. *Lev.*, xv, 39, 79/100.
- 60. *Lev.*, xv, 38, 79/99.
- 61. Richard Overton, *An arrow against all tyrants and tyranny*... (London, 1646), [3]. Thomas Edwards lists this as one of the currently common 'corrupt Opinions and Principles' (*The third Part of Gangraena. Or, A new and higher Discovery of the Errors, Heresies, Blasphemies, and insolent Proceedings of the Sectaries of these times*... (London, 1646), 1, [17]).
- 62. *Patriarcha and Other Political Works of Sir Robert Filmer*, ed. Peter Laslett (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1949), 54. *Patriarcha*, written in the late 1630s, is subtitled *A Defence of the Natural Power of Kings against the Unnatural Liberty of the People*.

5 Hobbes's Moral Philosophy

Hobbes's moral philosophy largely consists of the derivation of what he calls 'the laws of nature' (*EL*, I, 15, 16, 17; *De Cive*, chs. 2, 3, and 4; *Lev.*, chs. xiv, xv). There is a sense in which this is a virtue-ethics, though one that radically revises Aristotle. The theory is partly concerned with finding a compelling basis for virtues that correspond to Christian ones, or facsimiles of them. It is also supposed to distinguish basic from nonbasic virtues. The theory also assigns meanings to virtue terms intended to command public agreement, thereby stabilising moral rhetoric at a time when Hobbes thought terms like 'good' and 'evil', 'just' and 'unjust' could mean an alarmingly wide range of things. The theory is supposed to be compatible with pretheoretical disagreements about value, but not, in my view, with anything that deserves to be called moral scepticism or relativism.

I. THE LAWS OF NATURE

The laws of nature are rational precepts for governing one's actions in ways that will preserve one's life (*Lev.*, xiv, 3, 63–4/79). Hobbes did not think that the precepts he outlined call for types of behaviour his readers would find unfamiliar. It was a commonplace, for example, that people should, in the words of the Lord's Prayer, forgive others their trespasses, and the sixth law of nature is that people pardon the offences of those who, repenting those offences, want pardon. People did not need to be told by Hobbes to pardon people, for that was a familiar enough requirement of Christianity. What was not obvious was the place of the law of pardoning among the general moral precepts. What makes the law of pardon the *sixth* law of nature, for

example? Because it is a near consequence of laws of nature that Hobbes thought he had for the first time identified as fundamental. Hobbes's science of the laws of nature finds a basis for all of the rest of the recognised moral precepts in one or two fundamental precepts: chapter xiv of *Leviathan* expounds these fundamental laws, and chapter xv shows how the rest are in some sense consequences of the first two.

The fundamental law of nature is to seek peace and follow it (*Lev.*, xiv, 4, 64–5/80). 'Peace' Hobbes has already defined negatively (*Lev.*, xiii, 8, 61–3/76), as the condition in which there is no war, that is, a known disposition on the part of many to fight. To seek peace is necessarily to seek peace in the condition of war. But what form does seeking peace take? It cannot consist of an act of *surrender* to those who are willing to fight. No one can be asked to seek peace in this sense, for everyone has an inalienable right – what Hobbes calls 'the Right of Nature' – to protect himself, and surrendering to those who are willing to fight defeats the legitimate aim of self-protection (*Lev.*, xiv, 5, 64–5/80), for it makes one prey to others (*ibid.*). Seeking peace is seeking peace *consistent* with the 'right' of nature, which means seeking peace only with those who are also willing to do so, to the extent they are willing to do so. And how this is done is the subject of the second law of nature:

That a man be willing, when others are so too, as far-forth, as for peace, and defence of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down the right to all things, and to be contented with as much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself. (Lev., xiv, 5, 64–5/80)

To lay down a right to all things, Hobbes goes on to explain, is to enter into a covenant with like-minded people, people who are also seeking peace, and who are also willing to do so by laying down the same right. Later (*Lev.*, xvii, 13, 86–8/109), it turns out that the only way of laying down this right effectively (that is to say, in return for the realistic prospect of long-term security and a modest well-being) is by each simultaneously transferring it to someone empowered by the transfer to see to the security of all of the covenanters: namely, an all-powerful sovereign.

The injunction 'to give up as much liberty as peace requires', sums up the first two requirements of the law of nature. The third law of nature makes it easier to abide by the second. It calls upon people to

'perform their covenants made' (*Lev.*, xv, 1, 70–2/89), including, the covenants by which they transfer the right of nature to whomever becomes the sovereign. Hobbes identifies behaviour in keeping with the third law of nature as justice. In discussing the third law of nature, Hobbes confronts the problem that violations of it sometimes look reasonable. In the case of covenants where one party has to perform first and trust the other to perform later, why is it not always in someone's interest to be a nonperforming second party, someone who defaults on an agreement when the other person has done his or her part? Hobbes's answer is that if such a tactic works at all, it is good luck and so the tactic was not reasonably followed. What is more, it could not be successfully tried more than once, for then one's reputation as a defaulting party would precede one and make one an enemy of others. In short, though it at first seems reasonable to be unjust by defaulting, reflection indicates that it is better to be a cooperative covenanter. This reasoning parallels that of prisoner's dilemmas, in which the optimum strategy is not the uncooperative one that at first seems best to each prisoner.

The fourth law of nature calls upon people not to make those from whom they receive gifts regret their gift-giving (*Lev.*, xv, 16, 74–6/94). This law of nature has particular application to the man or body of men who receives the transfer of right from the many, making him or the body of men sovereign. This man or body of men in effect receives the gift of the obedience of the many. It is a gift because nothing is promised in return. But the many will regret their gift if the peace for the sake of which they obey the sovereign is not delivered. So while the sovereign has not promised to see to the peace of the many, he breaks a law of nature if he does not do his best to secure it.

The fifth law of nature tells each person to give up not only the least necessary for peace, but anything not absolutely required by peace. This is complaisance or mutual accommodation (*Lev.*, xv, 17, 74–6/95). It goes against the fifth law of nature to retain anything unnecessary for collective self-preservation or peace, especially anything unnecessary that provokes conflict or a disturbance of the peace. The sixth law of nature helps mutual accommodation over time and is the requirement of pardon (*Lev.*, xv, 18, 76–8/96). The seventh law of nature seems to contradict the sixth, calling for pardon, but does not in fact do so. The seventh law says that the return of evil for evil should be done with a view to the benefit it brings

in the future (*Lev.*, xv, 19, 76–8/96). This seems to contradict the sixth law because permission for revenge seems to run counter to the requirement of pardon. But there is no conflict. The sixth law does not say ‘pardon those who trespass against you’. It says ‘pardon those who are sorry for their trespasses and want pardon’. The unrepentant are fair game for revenge, so long – and here the seventh law comes in – as it is revenge with a future pay-off. Getting even is not a justification in itself. There must be some further good to be got from it, such as the permanent elimination of someone who would go on being a trouble-maker.

The eighth and ninth laws of nature go against shows of hostility in general and shows of presumed superiority in particular (*Lev.*, xv, 18, 19, 76–8/96). Taken together with the tenth and eleventh laws (*Lev.*, xv, 22, 23, 76–8/97), the eighth and ninth call upon all men to treat each other as equals, and, when placed in judgement over men, to treat them as equals of one another, including in matters of distribution (twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth laws, (*Lev.*, xv, 25, 26, 27, 76–9/97–8)). Two laws – the fifteenth and sixteenth – secure respectively the safety of mediators and the authority and need for arbitrators (*Lev.*, xv, 29, 30, 78–9/98). The seventeenth, which disqualifies people from being judges in their own case (*Lev.*, xv, 31, 78–9/98), the eighteenth (*Lev.*, xv, 32, 78–9/98), which disqualifies the partial from the role of judge, and the nineteenth, which says that judges should treat witnesses as equally authoritative, other things being equal, seem redundant in view of the eleventh, that if ‘a man be trusted to judge between man and man, ... that he deal equally between them’ (78–9/98).

A final law of nature added in the Review and Conclusion of *Leviathan* requires each person, as far as possible, to protect in times of War the authority by which he is protected in times of peace (*Lev.*, 390–1/490). This brings the total number of laws of nature to twenty. Hobbes concedes (*Lev.*, xv, 34, 78–9/99) that there are probably other laws of nature in the sense of precepts that, if followed, preserve one’s life – a law against drunkenness, for example – but the laws of nature he is concerned with in chapter xv are primarily those that help people preserve themselves while in the company of others who are at times hostile.

What ties the laws of nature together? The short answer is, ‘All are ways of seeking peace’. But this is not the answer Hobbes gives in

chapter xv. Instead, he invokes the biblical Golden Rule: 'Do not that to another, which thou wouldst not have done to thyself' (*Lev.*, xv, 35, 78–9/99). The point of saying that the biblical precept encapsulates the laws of nature is clear: it is a way of asserting the orthodoxy of the morality he outlines, as well as the ease of internalising it.¹ With his explanation of the laws of nature complete, Hobbes comments on the bindingness of the precepts. In a passage that has long occupied commentators, he claims that

The laws of nature oblige *in foro interno*; that is to say, they bind to a desire they should take place; but *in foro externo*; that is, to the putting them in act, not always. For he that should be modest and tractable, and perform all he promises, in such time and place where no man else should do so, should but make himself a prey to others, and procure his own certain ruin, contrary to the ground of all laws of nature, which tend to nature's preservation. (*Lev.*, xv, 36, 78–9/99)

As I read it, the passage restates the point that Hobbes makes when explaining the second law of nature: that his precepts need not be observed in practice where most of one's companions violate them, for in those circumstances followers of the law of nature make themselves probable victims – prey – of violators. On the other hand, though people are sometimes freed from the obligation of carrying them out in practice, they ought always to *want* or *try* to carry them out. That is what it is for the laws of nature to oblige *in foro interno*. Does this latter sort of obligation look forward to the demands duty is supposed to make in a moral theory like Kant's? Is it a gesture in the direction of deontology?

Certainly the laws of nature are not categorical imperatives in the sense that they command independently of any empirical or pathological appetite or aversion that agents have on account of being animals. The laws of nature only motivate as means of self-preservation if there is a widespread natural aversion to death and a widespread natural appetite to go on living. If an unnatural longing for death overcomes an agent, or if other things seem just as important as, or more important than, staying alive, it is not so clear that even the *in foro interno* obligations apply. In Kant, however, the call of duty can still be heard by someone reduced to complete disaffection, and it holds of agents in virtue of their pure practical rationality, not their empirical natures.

2. THE SCIENCE OF THE LAWS OF NATURE AND THE SCIENCE OF VIRTUE

At the end of chapter xv Hobbes stands back from the laws of nature. He has completed his 'deduction' of the precepts and now makes certain claims about the status of that deduction. His main claim is that his deduction amounts to a science, and this science is the 'true and onely Moral Philosophy'. He then goes on to contrast this genuine or true moral philosophy with the unscientific and incorrect doctrines that have gone by that name, including Aristotle's doctrine of virtue. It is all done in a complicated paragraph that needs a great deal of unpacking:

And the science of them [the laws of nature] is the true and only moral philosophy. For moral philosophy is nothing else but the science of what is *good*, and *evil* in the conversation, and society of mankind. *Good* and *evil* are names which signify our appetites and aversions; which in different tempers, customs, and doctrines of men are different; and divers men differ not only in their judgment on the senses (of what is pleasant and unpleasant to the taste, smell, hearing, touch, and sight), but also of what is conformable or disagreeable to reason in the actions of common life. Nay, the same man in divers times differs from himself; and one time praiseth (that is, calleth good), what another time he dispraiseth (and calleth evil); from whence arise disputes, controversies, and at last war. And therefore so long a man is in the condition of mere nature (which is a condition of war) as private appetite is the measure of good and evil; and consequently, all men agree on this, that peace is good; and therefore also the way or means of peace which (which, as I have shewed before are *justice, gratitude, modesty, equity, mercy*, and the rest of the laws of nature) are good (that is to say, *moral virtues*), and their contrary vices, evil.

Now the science of virtue and vice is moral philosophy; and therefore the true doctrine of the laws of nature is the true moral philosophy. But the writers of moral philosophy, though they acknowledge the same virtues and vices, yet not seeing wherein consisted their goodness, nor that they come to be praised as the means of peaceable, sociable, and comfortable living, place them in a mediocrity of passions (as if not the cause, but the degree of daring, made fortitude; or not the cause, but the quantity of a gift, made liberality). (*Lev.*, xv, 40, 79–80/100)

The key to this passage is the claim that people are in the state of nature, which is a state of war, as long as they are each judges of good and evil. For each to be private judges of good and evil is for

them to be guided in what they call 'good' and 'evil' by fluctuating and sometimes idiosyncratic appetites and aversions. A step beyond this sort of guidance – the step from prescience to a science of good and evil – is made when agents reflect that war is the consequence of each being guided by private appetites. From the realisation that every man being the measure of good and evil leads to war, which they can each agree is bad, they can each go on to agree (a) that the absence of war – peace – is good; (b) that whatever is a means of making or keeping the peace is good; and (c) that justice, gratitude, and so on are good because they are means to peace. Against the background of Hobbes's inference from the passions that in the state of nature people are at war, (a)–(c) constitutes a science of virtue. It identifies patterns of behaviour that are uncontroversially good, and it identifies the *basis* of their each being good patterns of behaviour – their each being virtues – in their promoting peace.

Nonscientific moral philosophies, such as Aristotle's, now come under criticism. Hobbes says that the Aristotelian theory wrongly identifies patterns of good behaviour as those that avoid extremes, without indicating what *makes* those patterns of behaviour good. So the doctrine of the mean is not informative enough, and misleading in the little it does say. Hobbes's theory implies that moderation is irrelevant. If someone is what Aristotle calls reckless for the sake of peace, he can for all that be virtuous in Hobbes's sense; in the same way, generosity is giving something for the sake of peace and cooperation, regardless of how much is given. Hobbes probably misrepresents Aristotle. What makes a pattern of behaviour virtuous in Aristotle's ethics is its contributing to human flourishing, not its being a mean between extremes. Human flourishing is the development of human excellence or the realisation of the human potential for rationality and political life. Hobbes leaves this out of his sketch of the traditional, and, in his view, prescientific, doctrine of virtue. But even if he had not made this omission, he would have disagreed with Aristotle. Hobbes does not think, as Aristotle does, that rationality is characteristic of man or that the makings of rationality are natural, and he thinks people are naturally *unsuited* to political life, – not, as Aristotle did, that people are political by nature.

Where Hobbes does not depart from traditional virtue theory completely is in supposing that what moral philosophy does is to set out the means of achieving the best sort of human life. In this general

conception of moral philosophy he agrees with the Greeks and Romans. It is true that for Hobbes the best sort of human life is probably much less idyllic than the Greeks or Romans thought it could be. For example, he dismissed as out of keeping with the mechanical workings of humans any sort of well-being that consisted of tranquility of mind, the Stoic and Epicurean goal of *ataraxia*. Human beings were even at the best of times subject to a tumult of desire and sense and could no more come to rest psychologically than anything else set in motion and left to its own devices.

3. 'MORALL PHILOSOPHIE', 'ETHIQUES', 'CIVIL PHILOSOPHY', 'SCIENCE OF NATURAL JUSTICE'²

What is the relation between Hobbes's claim that his is the 'true and onely' moral philosophy and his claim to have invented civil science? Is civil science the same as, or, more inclusive than, something else he says he invented: the science of natural justice? Is civil science or the science of natural justice in turn the same as moral philosophy? What about 'ethiques', a science included in Hobbes's table of the several sciences in chapter ix of *Leviathan* (40/49)? In general Hobbes distinguishes between, on the one hand, moral philosophy, taken as the doctrine of the laws of nature, and, on the other hand, the doctrine of the rights and duties of sovereigns and subjects, which deserves to be called 'civil science'. 'Civil science' often consists of arguments from the terms of a social contract to the obligations and liberties of subjects and sovereigns. 'Ethiques' is something like moral psychology, serving as a background to the doctrine of the laws of nature; and the 'science of natural justice' sometimes serves as synonym for 'civil science', and sometimes overlaps with 'ethiques' and 'moral philosophy'. *Leviathan* seems to gear the classification of the sciences to the differences between kinds of bodies. According to the table of the sciences in chapter ix, the science of the just and unjust belongs to natural philosophy, or the science of natural bodies. In fact, it belongs to an outlying branch of physics. Civil philosophy is shown as a body of science entirely separate from natural philosophy, entirely separate, in particular, from the science of the just and unjust. Civil science has two branches. These get no names, but one has to do with the consequences of the properties of bodies politic or commonwealths for the rights and duties of sovereigns; while the

other deals with the same consequences for the rights and duties of subjects. The table assigns the science of just and unjust to the same set of sciences as rhetoric and logic, as they all deal with the consequences of human speech; 'ethiques', on the other hand, belongs to a different branch of science from the science of the just and unjust.

Is Hobbes simply inconsistent, relating virtues, civil science and the science of justice in one way in some writings and in other ways in others? In chapter ix of *Leviathan*, Hobbes's main aim is to distinguish the subject matter of history, natural and civil, from the subject matter of civil and natural philosophy. He should probably be taken as indicating the breadth of philosophical or scientific subject matter, rather than an order of dependence and independence among the sciences. Read as a table of dependence and independence, *Leviathan's* table of the sciences would look un-Hobbesian across the board, in natural philosophy as well as civil philosophy. It would make physics – the science of the qualities of bodies – a science on a par with a science of quantity and motion. Throughout his writings, however, Hobbes insists on the *dependence* of physics on the sciences of motion and quantity in general. There is no reason to think that in drawing up the table of the sciences Hobbes is silently taking it all back. The same goes for the apparent denial of dependence conveyed by the table of the sciences that fall under 'civil philosophy'. Hobbes makes it clear in writings that precede *Leviathan* – in the *Elements of Law*, *De Cive* and *De Corpore* – that ethics depends on the science of animate bodies in general; that civil science depends on ethics; and that the science of the duties and rights of subjects and sovereigns – what in chapter ix of *Leviathan* he calls 'civil philosophy' – depends on the contract that institutes the commonwealth.

Chapters xiii through xviii of *Leviathan* confirm that the sciences that chapter ix seems to represent as separate are anything but. The inference from the passions to the inevitability of war; the rational necessity of avoiding or curtailing war by contracting out of the state of nature and into a commonwealth; the many vesting absolute power in a sovereign man or assembly that is beneficiary of the contract; all of these things are as evident in the work of 1651 as in the work of 1642, *De Cive*, or come to that, Hobbes's first political treatise, *The Elements of Law* (1640). Still, *Leviathan* does not mirror *De Cive* exactly. The introduction strongly emphasises the status of a

commonwealth as an artefact, and, more than that, as an automaton analogous to a man in respect of its working parts. The introduction promises that *Leviathan* will uncover the nature of the commonwealth by reference to, in effect, its material and formal causes: what the state is made up of, and the conception its makers have of the finished product. The figure of the artificial man, and the idea that the explanation appropriate to commonwealths is the explanation appropriate to artefacts, recur throughout *Leviathan*, including in chapters that correspond to Hobbes's attacks on seditious opinions in other works.

One important respect in which this set-up affects the argument of *Leviathan* is that Hobbes imputes to the original makers of a commonwealth a conception of an *immortal* finished product. The commonwealth is no temporary construction, and arrangements that merely keep it going for a while are no real delivery from war but only a way of turning hot war to cold. A commonwealth that deserves the name has to be designed to last forever, to keep successive generations of citizens at peace. That is why a design of commonwealth that does not permit long-term prosperity, for example, is defective. For similar reasons, a design of commonwealth that does not see to the instruction of the young in peace-keeping is not attending to the long life of the commonwealth. Apart from immortality, the artefact that is the commonwealth has to have the right sort of unity if it is actually to make a commonwealth out of what is otherwise just a crowd of men. One ingredient of unity is the existence of a single source of deliberation and decision in the sovereign, whose influence is felt throughout the body politic. The ideal of unity may be met in a more thoroughgoing way in a monarchy than in an assembly; but by the same token the ideal of immortality may be met less well, since the delicate question of succession in a monarchy sometimes leads to the premature dissolution of a body politic.

Some of Hobbes's arguments against certain political arrangements, then, depend on the language of building things to serve a purpose. But these sorts of arguments are no less arguments to conclusions about how commonwealths *ought* to be made by their manufacturers, than the arguments about justice in *De Cive* are arguments about how individuals in existing states *ought* to behave. Although *Leviathan* has more to say than *De Cive* about the functions of government institutions and of nongovernmental corporate bodies like

trading companies and families (*Lev.*, xxii), and although *Leviathan* develops at great length the analogy between some of these functions and those physiological functions that keep the human body and the human species going (cf. *Lev.*, xxvi), this does not change the work of civil science from that of prescribing the design of institutions, or of prescribing the behaviour that citizens and officials ought to display, to some other, explanatory, purpose. Civil science is still in the business of saying how sovereigns ought to conduct themselves if they are to see to public safety, and how citizens ought to conduct themselves if they are not to revert to their natural condition of war.

Chapter xxix is one of those that keeps the metaphor of the artificial man going, while repeating the message of the earlier political treatises against sedition. Sedition – the act of going back on the transfer of the right of nature by presuming to be judge of what is required for public well-being – turns out to be the poison that causes all the diseases of the body politic (*Lev.*, xxix, 6, 168–70/212), and five or six seditious doctrines are identified and criticised. The first two are criticised because they depend on ignoring or denying the fact that in the commonwealth subjects undertake to be guided by the Public conscience embodied in the civil law. The seditious doctrines in question either assert or presuppose that even in the commonwealth individuals are able to make these determinations themselves as individuals. The fourth and fifth seditious doctrines depend on underestimating the scope of the sovereign prerogative, when people agree amongst themselves to let someone else decide for all what will make them safe. *All* the means required for securing public safety include the power of determining property, as well as the power of determining law and whatever other powers are required. There is no *distribution* of these powers; for this would mean multiple loci of authority, and so reproduce on a smaller scale the conditions of conflicting judgement and violent contention found in the state of nature, which people who are now subject to the contract have agreed to leave behind.

All of the points against sedition can be made while dropping the artificial man metaphor; and some of them at least are arguments against sedition by reference to the way these opinions go back on the agreement among the subjects and the gift of obedience to the sovereign. So the artificial man metaphor notwithstanding, chapter xxix is still persuasive – or, perhaps better, dissuasive – civil science,

producing arguments against opposition to government by reference to what subjects can reasonably be taken to have agreed to, or given over. Or, to put it another way, chapter xxix does not just classify diseases of the body politic but gives reasons *why* they are diseases rather than aspects of the normal functioning of the commonwealth. And some of the reasons why indicate that acting on seditious opinions would break the social contract.

I have been suggesting that *Leviathan* does not break the mould of the civil science that is found in *De Cive* and *The Elements of Law*. *Leviathan* still presents arguments against certain clearly identified forms of behaviour on the part of subjects. What is more, these arguments are absolutely central to the distinctive purposes of the book, which are to show that several supposed sources of ecclesiastical authority in the commonwealth either derive from the sovereign or are spurious. There are no sources of ecclesiastical authority independent of the sovereign, still less above the sovereign, and there is no scriptural basis for his submission to a church or to a Pope, not even for the sake of Salvation. Moreover, just as the division of a sovereign power is tantamount to the dissolution of that power; so the division of powers between the temporal and spiritual authorities is also tantamount to a negation of sovereignty. Either there is a single temporal power in charge of the state, or there is really no state at all (*Lev.*, xxix, 15, 170–3/215–16). Submission simultaneously to a temporal *and* a spiritual power, except a spiritual power authorised by the sovereign, is not, then, a means to peace.

4. ARGUMENTS FROM JUSTICE

I now want to press a question about Hobbes's arguments against certain sorts of peace-disturbing or peace-preventing behaviour, including sedition. How far do these arguments tend to be arguments from justice? In *Leviathan* arguments against two seditious doctrines undoubtedly *are* arguments from justice. One seditious doctrine is to the effect that citizens may legitimately take it upon themselves to distinguish good from evil; the other is that people are excused from doing anything that is against their conscience. These doctrines, which Hobbes regards as pretty close in content to one another, are wrong because they go against the undertaking that establishes the commonwealth – the undertaking to leave value judgements to

a common sovereign power. This is straightforwardly an argument from justice in Hobbes's sense. But other arguments against sedition are arguments from the undesirability of war together with the assertion of certain supposed sufficient conditions for war. The argument against the separation of powers is of this kind. It is not an argument from justice. Neither is the argument against the seditious doctrine that even sovereigns are subject to the law. The argument against this doctrine is that no one can be subject to laws by being subject to himself (*Lev.*, xxix, 8, 168–70/213).

Arguments from justice then are not Hobbes's only arguments to normative conclusions, even when the target is sedition; yet we are led to expect that arguments from justice, or at least the concept of justice, will have a preeminent position in Hobbes's civil science. We are led to expect this wherever Hobbes seems to identify civil science with the science of justice or the science of natural justice, as in *De Cive* and *The Elements of Law*; and we are led to expect it when Hobbes claims, in a passage from the prefatory material of *De Cive*, that justice is fundamental to the other moral virtues. Even in the earliest of the three political treatises, however, the claims for the centrality of the concept of justice and of its requirements seem exaggerated. Both *The Elements of Law* and *De Cive* dwell on the conditions for entering into contracts and the necessity of keeping them at much greater length than on details associated with other moral virtues or other laws of nature, and there are a number of indications that in both the theory of the laws of nature and in Hobbes's discussion of the rights and duties of sovereigns and the duties of citizens, justice is only one consideration among others.

To begin with, there can hardly be any doubt that the most fundamental law of nature, or moral requirement, is that of seeking peace. Justice as a moral requirement is derived from the moral requirement of seeking peace. Justice is a moral requirement because transferring rights is a means to peace, rights are transferred through contracts, and justice is a matter of keeping contracts. For its part, the requirement of peace is not derived from any other requirement, and the concept of peace is not dependent on the concept of justice, either. It is defined as the absence of war, and war in its turn is defined independently of the concept of justice. Hobbes might have claimed quite uncontroversially that his civil science was the science of peace. This would accommodate his saying in all three political treatises that

what the laws of nature have in common is that they promote self-preservation (*EL*, Pt. I, xvii, 14) or peace (*De Cive*, iii, 31; *Lev.*, xv, 40, 79–81/100). He does not say that what they all have in common is that they promote justice. Again, when Hobbes has completed a long list of the laws of nature and casts about for a formulation that puts them all in a nutshell, what he hits upon as that nutshell is the biblical Golden Rule, or something close to it (*De Cive*, iii.26; *EL*, xvii, 9; *Lev.*, xv, 35, 78–79/99) – do not do to another that which thou wouldst not have done to thyself. This rule comes much closer to the eleventh law of nature, which requires everyone to be treated equally (*EL*, vii, 1; *De Cive*, iii, 13; *Lev.*, xv, 23, 76–8/97) than to the law requiring justice.

There is another line of thought in Hobbes's writings that gives justice a particularly central role in his doctrine of the laws of nature. In *De Cive* it runs like this:

The breaking of an *Agreement*, like asking for the return of a gift, (which always occurs by some action or failure to act) is called a WRONG [INIURIA]. Such an action or failure to act is said to be *unjust* (*iniustia*); so that *wrong* and *unjust* action or failure to act, have the same meaning (iii.3). . . . It follows that a wrong can only be done to someone with whom an agreement has been made, or to whom something as been given as a gift, or promised by *agreement* (iii.4).

If, as seems to be implied, the distinctions between, on the one hand, just and unjust action and, on the other, doing right and doing wrong coincide, then justice might seem to be more fundamental than other moral notions. But almost as soon as he puts it forward in *De Cive*, Hobbes seems to take back the claim that unjust and wrong are interchangeable, and that wrong presupposes agreement. He admits that there are differences between injustice and wrongdoing with regard to *who* is typically wronged or suffers injustice. He also says that cruelty (vengeance without regard to future good) is always against the laws of nature even in war (iii.27), implying that someone who suffers cruelty seems to be wronged even in the absence of agreements.

Another distinction that Hobbes makes is that between the justice of actions and the justice of persons. This distinction is drawn differently and given different significance in different writings, but one important use that Hobbes seems to make of it is to broaden the

scope of justice to include all right action. Justice of actions may be narrowly a matter of keeping agreements, but a just man might just as well be called a righteous man:

A just man . . . is he that taketh all the care he can that his actions may all be just; and an unjust man is he that neglecteth it. And such men are more often in our language stiled by the name of righteous and unrighteous, than just and unjust; though the meaning be the same. (*Lev.*, xxv, 10, 73–4/93)

In *De Cive* similarly, Hobbes sometimes runs together obeying all the laws of nature, or the laws of God, with being just (xviii, 6). These passages seem unconvincing as attempts to *show* that right-doing, or righteousness, is always a species of justice. Although the pretheoretical uses of the terms 'right', 'just' and 'moral' in our own day may overlap, and though the uses of 'just' and 'righteous' might have overlapped in Hobbes's day – the passage from *Leviathan*, however, suggests a divergence – what is at issue is how far a *defined* concept of justice could converge with a *defined* concept of the right or righteous within a *science* of justice. It is the defined concepts that fit into Hobbes's science of natural justice. But the passages where the sense of 'just' seems to expand to take up the whole space occupied by 'moral' are not passages where Hobbes is building his systematic account of justice.³ In *Leviathan*, he is observing connections between ordinary pretheoretical uses of 'just' and that of his theory; in *De Cive*, he is commenting on the requirements for salvation.

These examinations of the limits of the concepts of justice and righteousness in common speech are legitimate enough, but they don't help his focus. Not only do arguments from justice and the concept of justice appear to lack the centrality claimed for them by Hobbes, but the agreement to form the commonwealth seems to have escape clauses that make it unclear when the agreement has been kept and when it has been broken. To begin with, no one who transfers the right of nature to the sovereign can be said to give up the right to judge whether he is in mortal peril (cf. e.g., *Lev.*, xiv, 29, 69–70/87). This means that someone within the commonwealth who sincerely fears for his life can do what he thinks best to protect himself from imminent attack, even if that means resorting to the sort of violence or the sort of weapons of defence only allowed by law to the police. In an era when some heavily armed groups

believe in an international conspiracy to undermine their countries and their way of life, ultimately through armed invasion, this particular escape clause may be an extremist's charter. If the threat appears real enough to the people concerned, it is unclear that they break the social contract by taking back the responsibility for their protection.

Another form of escape clause is written into the purpose of the commonwealth in the form of public safety. Hobbes says consistently in his political writings that the 'safety' that the sovereign secures has to be understood broadly, to go well beyond freedom from physical attack. In *De Cive*, for example, safety means 'a happy life, so far as that is possible' (xiii.4). And Hobbes goes on to place all the good things people can enjoy into four categories: (1) defence from external enemies; (2) preservation of internal peace; (3) acquisition of wealth, so far as this is consistent with public security; and (4) full enjoyment of innocent liberty. From this list the goods (1)–(3) are the most that a sovereign can hope to arrange for his subjects. Or as Hobbes puts it, 'Sovereigns can do no more for the citizen's happiness than to enable them to enjoy the possessions their industry has won them, safe from foreign and civil war' (iii.6). But this sets the standards of sovereign performance pretty high: subjects who did not worry about assault or robbery but who were very heavily taxed might think that in the extended sense of 'safety' outlined in Hobbes's political writings, they were 'unsafe'. And it is not even clear that this extended concept of safety is consistent with the central Hobbesian claim that the sovereign has unlimited and exclusive power to determine what belongs to whom. Nor is this tension peculiar to *De Cive*. Both *The Elements of Law* (Pt. 2, viii, i) and *Leviathan* (xxx, 1, 173–5/219) employ a concept of safety as wide as that in *De Cive*, while giving the sovereign *carte blanche* to limit that safety to something very close to bare preservation.

So there is room for a troubling divergence of opinion on the possible grounds for resistance to a sovereign as the citizen might see them, in terms of his/her safety, and the narrow definition of safety presented by the sovereign. Perhaps to gloss over this Hobbes refrains from using arguments from justice at every opportunity in his arguments against sedition, or in his arguments in favour of a concentrated and unlimited authority of government; and he is wise to refrain from doing so. There is simply too much slack in the conditions for breaking the social contract.

I infer that there is in fact no firm dividing line between Hobbes's 'science' of natural justice and his moral philosophy or doctrine of the laws of nature in general. Civil science is certainly *in part* an application of the third law of nature to the special sort of covenant that sets up the commonwealth, but this does not seem an entirely free-standing piece of apparatus. When it comes to the arguments against insubordination by subjects, Hobbes appeals not only to the need for justice but to the basis for that need in the imperative of peace and assurance against death, and the need to appoint a sovereign judge, as a corollary. The determination of what is just and unjust is a technical question embedded in civil science, and not a matter of opinion. This is stated baldly in *Behemoth* where Hobbes claims that 'the science of *just* and *unjust*' is a demonstrable science, accessible to those of even the meanest capacity, raising the question so important for the peace and safety of the realm:

Why may not men be taught their duty, that is, the science of just and unjust, as divers other sciences have been taught, from true principles, and evident demonstration; and much more easily than any of those preachers and democratical gentlemen could teach rebellion and treason?⁴

5. HOBBS AND TWENTIETH-CENTURY MORAL PHILOSOPHY⁵

There are at least two twentieth-century misunderstandings of Hobbes's contractarianism. One consists of reading back a twentieth-century antitranscendentalist motivation for contractarianism into *Leviathan*. The idea is that principles are morally right if rational agents could have agreed to them in fair circumstances. What might otherwise have seemed metaphysical or other-worldly – moral rightness – comes to be grounded in the unmetaphysical idea of a fair or rational agreement.⁶ It is sometimes thought that, without this sort of grounding, moral theory itself is open to an important kind of scepticism.⁷ A metaphysical grounding for ethics might, for example, identify a kind of motivation for being moral that was present only in Plato's heaven or, short of this, only in exceptional human beings. In that case, there would be a mismatch between the scope of morality – all human beings – the supposed inescapability of morality, and the fact that few human beings were actually moved by, or even had access to, the theoretically posited grounds for morality. It

might be denied that morality, transcendently grounded, presents any values that are objective or have authority for creatures with our sort of impulses. If, on the other hand, moral obligations are based on what we can reasonably agree to, where the conditions of rationality are not too exacting for most humans, or not other-worldly, then this problem seems to be avoided.

How far does all of this apply to Hobbes? He is certainly no transcendentalist about moral philosophy – he denied that values, including moral values, were Platonic forms or that they were constituted by divine commands. But he does not resort to a social contract to bring moral philosophy down to earth either. In any case, a social contract does not create moral values where there were none; it rather connects moral values to the goods of self-preservation or peace. These are nontranscendental goods *par excellence* because they are all about the protection of mortal life. What is more, these goods can plausibly be said to help organise moral values. Peace and self-preservation are the goods that all of the moral prescriptions and prohibitions – the laws of nature – can be taken to promote, and from which they can be taken to be derived. The most fundamental laws of nature imply that one should seek peace by giving up some liberty. This is done by contracting with others to obey a sovereign power. Making the social contract is morally required because seeking peace is morally required, but the idea of the social contract does not bring the concept of peace down to earth. It is already down to earth, understood as ending or preempting the life-threatening situation of war.

Nor is Hobbes's appeal to this-worldly goods like peace or preservation an attempt to save his moral theory from scepticism of the same sort as twentieth-century meta-ethical scepticism about the intelligibility of objective values. To the extent that Hobbes is concerned to confront scepticism about morals at all, it is the sort of scepticism that asks whether there can ever be such a thing as systematic and uncontroversial moral guidance. The twentieth-century meta-ethical sceptics – Mackie and Harman⁸ in our own day – do not worry that ethics isn't definite or systematic, or that its central requirements – 'Keep your promises!', 'Tell the truth!' – don't seem compelling to agents. Hobbes *does* worry about these things. He worries about the ambiguous messages of Scripture, for example, when Scripture is used as a moral authority for doing things; and he worries about the equivocal judgments of the Common Law courts, where it

is left to precedent rather than the strict rules of a civil code, to guide citizens' behaviour. But, once again, it is not social contract that mitigates these sources of uncertainty in practical guidance. Other theoretical devices are used. There is the identification of moral theory with a certain ordered derivation of laws of nature. There is the arrangement of moral requirements into fundamental and derivative, the most fundamental and uncontroversial moral requirement being to seek peace. In terms of compliance, Hobbes's theory of the rights and duties reduces the sources of law and practical guidance to one, the sovereign, and backs this up with all the coercion the sovereign can summon. There is the secularist and deflationary understanding of the requirements of salvation, which radically reduces the amount of practical guidance that one *needs* to get from the Bible. There is his cynical portrayal of the sovereign's rivals as sources of authoritative guidance: bishops, ambitious aristocrats, lawyers, and the Pope. All of these considerations conspire to reduce moral guidance to a simple formula: obey the sovereign and follow the civil law.

Hobbes's theory of the state of nature and contract does not have a theoretical purpose that would anticipate a Gauthier, a Harman or a Mackie. It has quite a different purpose. It represents a demythologised understanding of what it is to be human; specifically, an understanding of what it is to be human that is radically opposed to Aristotle's. Man is by nature unpolitical or antisocial, Hobbes thinks, and his picture of the state of nature is used to show what he means by this.

6. GAUTHIER AND HAMPTON ON HOBBS'S SIGNIFICANCE AS MORAL THEORIST

It is time to address twentieth-century Hobbesians, moral and political philosophers who explicitly claim to be inspired by Hobbes's texts, even if they go off in a direction that they admit Hobbes might not have wanted to go. Among these David Gauthier is perhaps foremost. Although giving more than one account of Hobbes's relevance to twentieth-century political theory, Gauthier's most important claim is that Hobbes pioneers a conception of morality as the conventional or artificial restraint of natural behaviour by conventional reason.⁹ The meagreness of Hobbes's resources appeals to Gauthier. Hobbes does not have to invoke a God, a universal sympathy, or

even the authority of a concept of impersonal welfare, but rather makes do with rational self-interest alone. His very parsimoniousness fits the assumptions taken to define the rationality of economic man.¹⁰ Jean Hampton emphasises broadly similar theses in distinguishing Hobbesian moral contractarianism, distinguishing it and its twentieth-century exponents from Kantian moral contractarianism and its twentieth-century versions.¹¹

This reading of Hobbes is not wild. Agents in the state of nature *are* supposed to contract with one another only for their own good. One's own good *is* a little like subjective utility. Each agent is supposed to act to promote what he/she, possibly idiosyncratically, has the strongest considered desire for. One choice is more rational than another in the contract situation to the extent that more advantage accrues from it to the chooser. No choice is disinterested. These background assumptions do correspond to the ideas of value as utility, rationality as the maximization of utility, and the rejection of altruism. By entering into the contract each Hobbesian agent is supposed to foresee some net advantage to himself/herself, some advantage in the form of more satisfied appetite and less satisfied aversion. Each can foresee that, by entering the contract, they will lose some liberty in doing and taking what they like, but, by the same token, they are less liable to suffer at the hands of others who can do and take what *they* like. The loss of liberty is more consistent with satisfied appetite than the loss of life, and loss of life is what the contract is, above all, insurance against. Loss of life is also what the retention of liberty promotes.

The contract consists of a mutual agreement among the many to submit to one or a few, who are expected to lay down rules that will enable the many peacefully to coexist with one another. Gauthier thinks Hobbes's text suggests more than one answer to the question why it is rational to submit, given the loss of liberty. One is Hobbes's answer to the 'fool' (*Lev.*, xv, 4, 72/90): 'The fool hath said in his heart: "there is no such thing as justice" . . . seriously alleging that: "every man's conservation and contentment being committed to his own care, there could be no reason why every man might not do what he thought conduced thereunto, and therefore also to make or not make, keep or not keep, covenants was not against reason when it conduced to one's benefit."' But according to Hobbes the fool miscalculates. The possibility that breaking of a covenant could

be advantageous is slight, and where there is an external power to punish opportunistic violations, it is more dangerous for a potential covenant-breaker to violate than to comply with the covenant. This answer Gauthier thinks is inadequate because it does not challenge the fool's equation of the irrational with the disadvantageous. The makings of a better answer, he thinks, are available in that place in Hobbes's text where he considers endless disputes over theoretical matters, his answer being, in effect, that people need hand over their subjective measures of right and wrong in exchange for those of an impartial judge or arbiter. The arbiter's point of view corrects state-of-nature conceptions of disadvantage. The inconveniences of loss of liberty are small in comparison with those of loss of life, but it may take detachment from one's projects and desires to see this – and this is where a kind of conventional reason takes over from practical reason geared to expected appetite. As Gauthier puts it, not altogether satisfactorily, 'One may paraphrase Hobbes's argument for the second law of nature as an argument for replacing natural reason, directed to individual preservation, with a conventional reason directed to peace'¹² If covenanting is the first application of conventional reason, the second is the simultaneous authorization of the sovereign:

Since men tend to be ruled by passion rather than reason, Hobbes requires the Sovereign, not only as arbiter, whose reason, accepted by all as right reason, prescribes the means to peace, but also as enforcer, whose power, authorized by all, is exercised to maintain peace.¹³

Hobbes's two applications of conventional reason – mutual and simultaneous covenanting and authorization – define his contribution to modern moral theory, according to Gauthier. Hobbes is a man before his time, his dual conventionalism anticipating in its parsimoniousness the twentieth-century economist's conception of rational man.

Although this interpretation of Hobbes is not baseless, it seems to me to be internally confused, and it does not fit much of Hobbes's text. It is internally confused precisely on account of its dualism, in locating, that is to say, the seat of conventional reason in two different places – the agent in the state of nature and the sovereign, which is implausible. On the one hand, 'the primary task [of the sovereign] is to provide the conventional standard of right reason required to

uphold the laws of nature'.¹⁴ On the other hand, 'only in so far as *each man* takes peace as trumps are the laws of nature upheld'¹⁵ – which suggests that conventional standard of reason is as every contractor defines it. Hobbes's text clearly requires the second, widely distributed type of conventional reason, for it is for the sake of peace that everyone intends everyone else to understand his laying down his right and entering into the commonwealth. In other words, the good of peace can be understood and adopted as trumps by everyone, even in the state of nature. The idea that the familiar moral requirements are means to peace is also supposed to be generally accessible, in experience, in suitable political writings, including Hobbes's own, *and* in Scripture. So conventional reason, if that is what it is, is not exclusively embodied in the sovereign, and even if the sovereign is the sole arbiter in matters that are disputable, disputable matters would not include the claim that peace was an important, or maybe *the* chief, moral good – which is a precept of practical reason and accessible to everyone. Much more likely to be disputed were absolute sovereign right and the complete submission of subjects, as requirements for peace in practice. But Gauthier runs together the need for arbitration in controversial matters with the need for conventional reason to disclose peace as an agreed good. Conventional reason can probably do this last job without the need for an arbiter because the agreed good of peace can be uncontroversial. Peace would certainly have been uncontroversial as a high order good for Hobbes's religious *and* secular readers, in England and on the Continent in his day.

Second, Gauthier writes as if what he calls 'Hobbes's moral theory' began and ended with the explanation and defence of the second law of nature – that is, the moral requirement of laying down, by means of a special sort of contract, one's right of nature as an agent in the state of nature. The bearing of the moral theory on who owns what, on how far one can justly resist life-threatening sovereign commands, like the command to fight, on whether one has a right to anything more than one's life and protection against physical assault, on whether there can be many or few or only one interpreter of the law – all of this is left out. Partly this is because Gauthier speaks interchangeably of a moral theory and an account of the *possibility* of morality.¹⁶ Hobbes's moral theory, at least as I understand it, is only incidentally an account of the possibility of morality. It is

much more centrally a systematization of already recognised precepts of morality under a master-precept calling on everyone to seek the peace. The master-precept, of course, uses a concept – peace – which is given a revisionary definition as all time outside the state of nature. But it is the whole arrangement and defence of the laws of nature that counts as Hobbes's moral theory, not simply the theory of how they can be binding in practice, as Gauthier implies.

In a paper that contrasts Hobbesian with Kantian contractarianism in twentieth-century moral philosophy, Jean Hampton suggests that what makes the Hobbesian approach distinctive is also that which undermines it. Hobbesian contractarianism gives a distinctive answer to the question 'Why be moral?' The answer it gives is that it is in one's interest to be moral, in one's interest to cooperate, or to be disposed to cooperate, with other people in the pursuit of the good. But this answer, Hampton points out, is highly implausible in the presence of certain radical inequalities between potential cooperators. If there is a sufficient difference between the weak and the strong, then, notwithstanding the power of the weak to make up some of the deficit by cooperating, the remaining inequality still allows the strong to prevail by force. And the most weak or incapacitated, who are unable to bring much if anything to a cooperative project of joining forces, do not, in Hobbes's terms have much, if any, value at all. For in Hobbes's terms, the value of people is the difference their power would make when added to anyone else's in the pursuit of a project. Since the power of the powerless adds nothing to a common project, the powerless are worth nothing in turn. The purely instrumental value assigned by Hobbes's theory to individuals is hard to turn into intrinsic value or something close to intrinsic value, even when one tries to use the sophisticated resources of Gauthier's *Morals by Agreement*. Here is the rub, says Hampton, for unless something like intrinsic value *can* be conjured up, the implications of Hobbes's apparatus for the weak and vulnerable render it radically unsuited to a reconstruction of morality. Reasons for helping the weak and the strong lie at the very heart of morality, and just these reasons seem out of the reach of Hobbesians. But Kantian moral contractarianism does not leave itself open to the same objection.

Kantian contractarianism is nevertheless indebted to Hobbesian contractarianism, according to Hampton, for it preserves Hobbes's 'central insight about ethics', namely, that 'ethics should not be

understood to require that we make ourselves prey for others'.¹⁷ Hampton claims that this central Hobbesian insight tells against both subservience and exploitation in relationships, to both of which Kantian ethics is hostile.¹⁸ From this point of view, according to Hampton, Kantian ethics is an extension of Hobbesian ethics. Nor is his central insight that ethics rules out subservience and exploitation the only contribution of Hobbes's contractarianism to twentieth-century moral thought, according to Hampton. Equally important is the idea 'that morality is a human-made institution, which is justified only to the extent that it furthers human interests'.¹⁹

But I think that both of Hampton's positive claims about Hobbes's long-term contribution to moral theory are doubtful. It is true that Hobbes thinks morality should not be understood as requiring us to be prey for other people, but the word 'prey' really does need to be taken quite literally. Hobbes thinks that morality cannot coherently require people to offer themselves up to be killed by others. But this does not rule out many other kinds of subservience and dominance that are expressly permitted, indeed required, by institutions that can be understood to be peace-keeping or life-saving. Hampton's claim requires us to read 'becoming someone else's prey' in a metaphorical sense. One becomes someone else's prey by knowingly cooperating in their willingness to disadvantage one, and one illicitly makes someone else one's prey, by knowingly participating in a relationship in which one takes advantage of another. In this very extended sense of being someone else's prey, the American housewife who is treated as a maid by her children, to take one of Hampton's examples, is preyed upon by her children.²⁰ But just as Hobbes was unwilling to regard as real hurt mere hurt feelings, just as he was inclined to confine hurt to physical hurt when it came to defining the hurt that the sovereign owed anyone protection against (*Lev.*, xxvii), so the preying upon he would have wanted to exclude would be the sort involving physical harm or death, not mere exploitation. Hobbes's second long-term contribution, according to Hampton, is the alleged insight that morality is a human artefact. Certainly the state, as the framework of political life, is supposed to be an artefact according to Hobbes, but it is unclear that morality itself – understood as the prescriptions of the virtues and the prohibition of vices – is a purely human construct, in the sense that the laws of nature are a readily revisable set of conventions. On the contrary, Hobbes says

flatly that 'The laws of nature are immutable and eternal... For it can never be that war shall preserve life, and peace destroy it' (*Lev.*, xv, 38, 78–79/99–100). Again, harms to human life and health are not (or at any rate not all) harms by decision or convention: they interfere with the vital motions whether we like it or not. The connections between the vices of pride, inequity and injustice and war are also supposed to obtain independently of the communal agreement. If war is objectively bad because the loss of life is objectively a harm and the deprivation of the conditions for having or satisfying other appetites, then the reason for not taking life and not going to war seem to go deeper than convention as well. All these considerations taken together show that Hobbes was no moral relativist or moral sceptic. For someone who thinks that the laws of nature are immutable and eternal can be neither.

NOTES

1. But in fact it is not clear that the formula covers all the laws of nature; the fifteenth and sixteenth, in particular, are not matters of mutual reciprocity.
2. This section and the next draw on my 'Hobbes and the Morality beyond Justice', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 82 (2001): 227–42.
3. See D. Boonin-Vail, *Thomas Hobbes and the Science of Moral Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 110ff.
4. *Behemoth, or The Long Parliament*, ed. Ferdinand Tönnies (London, 1889, facsimile edn, ed. Stephen Holmes, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990), 39.
5. This section and the next draw on my 'Hobbes's Uses of the State of Nature' forthcoming in a volume on historiography of philosophy edited by Leo Catana.
6. Both John Rawls, in *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972), 256, and David Gauthier, 'Why Contractarianism?' in Vallentyne, ed. *Contractarianism and Rational Choice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 15–30, partly justify their versions of contractarianism this way.
7. See J. L. Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), 38.
8. Gilbert Harman, *The Nature of Morality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), ch. 1.
9. David Gauthier, 'Thomas Hobbes: Moral Theorist' in Gauthier, ed., *Moral Dealing: Contract, Ethics and Reason* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 11–23.

10. More specifically, Hobbes is supposed to have been the first to explain why it can be rational to cooperate even when there seems to be an advantage in not doing so (i.e., in prisoner's dilemma situations). The Hobbesian explanation is supposed to be contained in Hobbes's reply to the Fool who thinks there is no justice. See David Gauthier, 'Reason and Maximisation', reprinted in *Moral Dealing*, 209–33, and *Morals by Agreement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), where Gauthier develops this line of thought into a thesis about the rationality of constrained maximisation. People, who show others that they are willing to forego maximisation of their own advantage by reining themselves in, get more leeway from others than those who take every opportunity to maximise advantage.
11. Jean Hampton, 'Two Faces of Contractarian Thought' in Vallentyne, ed. *Contractarianism and Rational Choice*, 31–55.
12. Gauthier, 'Thomas Hobbes: Moral Theorist', 21.
13. Gauthier, 'Thomas Hobbes: Moral Theorist', 22.
14. Gauthier, 'Thomas Hobbes: Moral Theorist', 20.
15. Gauthier, 'Thomas Hobbes: Moral Theorist', 21.
16. Gauthier, 'Thomas Hobbes: Moral Theorist', 11.
17. Hampton, 'Two Faces of Contractarian Thought', 53.
18. See Thomas Hill, *Dignity and Practical Reason* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), *passim*.
19. Hampton, 'Two Faces of Contractarian Thought', 36.
20. Hampton, 'Two Faces of Contractarian Thought', 54.

6 Hobbes on Persons, Authors and Representatives

I

Hobbes offers his most extended analysis of the linked concepts of authorisation and representation in chapter xvi of *Leviathan*, the chapter in which he rounds off Part I, 'Of Man', and paves the way for his discussion 'Of Commonwealth' in Part II. This pivotal chapter, 'Of PERSONS, AUTHORS, and things Personated', has no counterpart in either of the earlier recensions of his civil philosophy.¹ Nothing like it can be found in *The Elements of Law*, which he had circulated in manuscript in 1640, nor in *De Cive*, which he had published in 1642. Hobbes never speaks in these texts of representation or representatives, nor of the underlying suggestion that it is possible to serve as an 'author' who can authorise the performance of an action by someone else. By contrast, in *Leviathan* these concepts form the bedrock of Hobbes's theory of the legitimate state, and in the Latin version of 1668 he was content to offer a simplified version of essentially the same argument.

Deploying his preferred method of beginning with definitions, Hobbes opens his analysis in chapter xvi without preamble as follows:²

A person is he whose words or actions are considered, either as his own, or as representing the words or actions of another man, or of any other thing to whom they are attributed, whether truly or by fiction. When they are considered as his own, then is he called a natural person; and when they are

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considered as representing the words and actions of another, then is he a feigned or artificial person.

Hobbes's basic suggestion here is that persons can be defined essentially in terms of their capacity to represent and be represented.³ A person is someone who, in speaking or acting, either represents himself – plays his own part – or else represents another person or thing. If you represent someone else – if you play his part, speak or act in his name – then you count as an artificial person; if you speak or act in your own name, then you count as a natural person. (As these passages illustrate, Hobbes always uses 'he', 'his', etc. when referring to agents, and I shall generally feel obliged to follow his usage.)

As this analysis makes clear, an artificial person is merely another name for a representative, and in the Latin version of *Leviathan* Hobbes drops the former term altogether, preferring simply to contrast 'natural' with 'representative' persons.⁴ By contrast, a natural person is someone whose words and actions, as Hobbes puts it, are 'considered as his own': he is someone who is capable of 'owning up' to them, taking responsibility for their occurrence. To this analysis Hobbes then adds that anyone who owns his actions may also be said to be their 'author', whether the actions in question are performed by the agent himself or by a representative to whom he has granted authority to act in his name. As Hobbes puts it:⁵

Of persons artificial, some have their words and actions *owned* by those whom they represent. And then the person is the *actor*, and he that owneth his words and actions is the *AUTHOR*, in which case the actor acteth by authority.

If, in other words, I genuinely have authority to act as a representative of someone else, this can only be because the other person has authorised me to perform the action in their name.

To be able to act in your own name, it is necessary to be a natural person. But to be able to act, it is not even necessary to be a person at all. For as Hobbes begins by laying down, it is possible for actions performed by authorised representatives to be attributed not merely to other persons but even to things – and even, he adds later in the chapter, to mere figments of the brain. As an example of the last possibility, he takes the case of the Gods of the heathen.⁶ They had no existence, but they were nevertheless able to hold and dispose

of property through the agency of the priests who served as their representatives and were authorised to do so by the state.⁷

When Hobbes turns in chapter xvii to examine the nature of the covenants that bring civil associations into being, one of his main purposes is to bring out the political implications of this analysis of persons, authors and representatives. He first declares that, when the members of a multitude covenant to submit to a common power, what they do is 'confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one Assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will'.⁸ Speaking in *The Elements* and *De Cive* about this act of conferment, Hobbes had described it as a simple relinquishment and hence an abandonment of rights.⁹ But he now speaks in startlingly different terms. To speak of a multitude conferring their power and strength, he now declares,¹⁰

is as much as to say, to appoint one man or assembly of men to bear their person, and every one to own and acknowledge himself to be author of whatsoever he that so beareth their person shall act, or cause to be acted, in those things which concern the common peace and safety.

The political covenant, in other words, is now said to take the form of an act not of relinquishment but of authorisation, an act by which every member of the multitude makes himself the author of whatever is said and done in his name by his sovereign representative.¹¹

One of the most striking features of this new way of explicating the covenant is that it picks up and deploys the distinctive vocabulary originally put into currency by the parliamentary and radical writers of the 1640s. Henry Parker, for example, had similarly opened his *Observations* of 1642 by declaring that man, not God, 'is the free and voluntary Author' of whatever powers are 'derived' into the hand of kings and magistrates. The people are always 'the Authors, or ends of all power' and hence 'the finall cause of Regall Authoritie'.¹² The anonymous *Maximes Unfolded* (1643) had likewise argued that 'God is not so exact in the choice of Magistrates as to be their Authours', preferring to leave it to the people to decide by whom they wish to be governed. He had concluded – in an astonishingly Hobbesian turn of phrase – that it is always men who act as 'the Authors, Instruments, matter, forme and end of Government'.¹³

A number of parliamentary writers had gone on to add that, if lawful governments can be instituted only when the people make a

grant of their own original authority, we can equally well say that the people must *authorise* their kings and magistrates to rule, and thus that governments are lawful only to the extent that they have duly been authorised. William Bridge explains in *The Truth of the Times Vindicated* (1643) that the legal act involved is that 'some are authorized to exercise jurisdiction in Common-wealths over others'.¹⁴ Philip Hunton in *A Treatise of Monarchie* (1643) underlines the strictness of the boundaries imposed by this agreement on the jurisdictions of kings. When the people authorise a ruler, 'then is his Authority limited', and 'neither are the instruments of his will exceeding those lawes, authorized'. Should he subsequently violate the terms of this authorisation, then his resulting acts 'are not *Legall* and binding, that is, are *non-Authoritative*'.¹⁵

Developing a very similar line of thought, Hobbes begins by echoing the account given by the parliamentary writers of the people as the authors of all power. As we have seen, he fully agrees that, when we covenant to institute a commonwealth, we become 'by this institution author of all the actions and judgements of the sovereign instituted'.¹⁶ He likewise agrees that, unless we are the authors of the powers to which we submit, those powers themselves will not be legitimate. The reason is that 'no man is obliged by a covenant whereof he is not author, nor consequently by a covenant made against or beside the authority he gave'.¹⁷

Hobbes continues to follow the parliamentary writers when he turns to consider what it means to speak of authorising someone to speak or act in our name. He had opened his discussion in chapter xvi by invoking the theatrical understanding of this question that Cicero had originally put into currency, and that many of the parliamentary writers had taken up. First Hobbes reminds us that in Latin the word *persona* 'signifies the *disguise* or *outward appearance* of a man, counterfeited on the stage, and sometimes more particularly that part of it which disguiseth the face'.¹⁸ He then explains that this is why 'he that acteth another is said to bear his person, or act in his name',¹⁹ and quotes the passage from the *De oratore* in which Cicero had spoken of sustaining three persons, 'my own, my adversary's, and the judge's'.²⁰ Hobbes's first suggestion is thus that the act of authorising someone is that of granting him the right to personate someone else.

As he correctly observes, however, this originally theatrical terminology was eventually generalised to apply 'to any representer of

speech and action, as well in tribunals, as theatres'.²¹ His considered view of what it means to personate someone is thus that it is equivalent to appointing just such a 'representer'. To which he adds that anyone authorised to serve as such an actor is nowadays susceptible of being described in a variety of ways. His list of equivalencies includes 'an *attorney*, a *deputy*, a *procurator*',²² but it is noticeable that he begins by singling out the term 'representer', the term that the parliamentarian and Leveller writers had originally introduced into the debate.²³

These arguments constitute a remarkable extension of Hobbes's earlier analysis in *The Elements* and *De Cive* of the covenant as a mere relinquishment of rights. Previous commentators who have focused on Hobbes's very different way of presenting his theory in *Leviathan* have generally concluded that he must have identified some weaknesses, difficulties or even contradictions in the initial statement of his case, and must have decided to recast it in an effort to cope with them.²⁴ By contrast with these somewhat speculative and question-begging hypotheses, my principal aim in what follows will be to suggest a different kind of explanation for the modifications that Hobbes introduced. What seems to me crucial is the extensive use he makes in the revised version of his theory of the distinctive vocabulary developed by the parliamentarian propagandists of the 1640s, the propagandists whom he stigmatises in chapter xxix of *Leviathan* as the 'democratical writers' and denounces for destroying the English monarchy.²⁵ What Hobbes is doing, I shall next attempt to show, is seeking to discredit these writers by demonstrating that it is possible to accept the basic structure of their theory without in the least endorsing any of the radical implications they had drawn from it. It is this new rhetorical strategy in *Leviathan*, and the way in which it leads Hobbes to enunciate a strongly contrasting theory of representative government, that next needs to be investigated.

II

To see how Hobbes follows out his new strategy, we need to begin by focusing on the moment at which he parts company with the democratical writers and their views about the genesis of lawful government. They had invariably assumed that civil associations must have arisen out of free and natural communities and had inferred that the whole body of the people must therefore be regarded (as Parker puts

it in his *Observations*) as 'the proper Subject' of sovereign power.²⁶ This, according to Hobbes, is an egregious error, and one of his basic purposes in presenting his melodramatic description of the state of nature in chapter xiii of *Leviathan* is to lay the error bare. There is simply no such thing, he retorts, as the body of the people. If we look beyond the bounds of civil association, what we find is nothing more than a throng or multitude of 'particular men'.²⁷ Furthermore, it is a multitude in which, due to the similarity of everyone's desires and powers, we are all 'dissociate' from each other and 'every man is enemy to every man'.²⁸ As a result, the natural condition of mankind is not merely a state of men 'in solitude', a state in which there is 'no society' and 'neither *propriety* nor *community*'; it is actually 'a condition of warre one against another', a perpetual war 'of every man, against every man'.²⁹

The crucial significance, according to Hobbes, of failing to recognise the frightening truth about our natural condition is that it betrays the democratical writers into giving a misleading account of the political covenant. They had generally argued that the body of the people, acting in the manner of a single Person, contracts with a designated ruler and consents to submit to his rule. They had assumed, that is, that the people are capable of acting as a unified community or group. As Parker puts it, the people need to be viewed not merely *divisim*, as single subjects, but *conjunctim*, as a *universitas* or 'politique corporation'.³⁰ This means, as the author of *Maximes Unfolded* adds, that when the people act by 'the common consent of all', they may be said to act as a 'union' and by 'their united power' as a corporation, and hence in the manner of a single person acting with one will and voice.³¹

Hobbes is now able to dismiss out of hand this aspect of the democratical writers' case. Before becoming subject to sovereign power, he retorts, the people 'are not one person'; they are nothing more than the individual and mutually hostile members of 'a disunited multitude'.³² It follows that the parliamentary vision of 'the whole multitude, as one party to the covenant' is, as Hobbes blankly asserts, 'impossible'.³³ To suppose otherwise is simply to misunderstand the natural condition of mankind.

If the political covenant cannot be an agreement between the body of the people and their designated ruler, what form can it possibly take? Hobbes's ingenious answer is that it takes the form of a

covenant between each and every individual member of the multitude. Everyone agrees with everyone else 'to submit their wills, every one to his will, and their judgements, to his judgment', with the result that the sovereign receives his authority from 'every particular man in the commonwealth'.³⁴ It is true that, once the individual members of the multitude have performed this act of submission, this finally has the effect of converting them from a mere throng into one Person. This is because they now have a single will and voice – that of their sovereign representative – which counts 'as the voice of them all'.³⁵

'A multitude of men', as Hobbes's summarises, 'are made *one* person, when they are by one man, or one person, represented'.³⁶ The outcome of the covenant is accordingly 'a real unity of them all, in one and the same person',³⁷ very much as the democratical writers had maintained. As Hobbes continually insists, however, this is the sole way in which a multitude can ever be viewed as a unified body of people. He concludes by recalling the rival parliamentary analysis and repudiating it at the same time. It is only 'the *unity* of the representer, not the *unity* of the represented, that maketh the person *one*'.³⁸ To which he adds that, in spite of what is generally believed, '*unity*, cannot otherwise be understood in multitude'.³⁹

So far these claims would have been largely familiar to any reader of Hobbes's previous attacks on the theory of popular sovereignty in *The Elements* and *De Cive*. There Hobbes had already argued that the people in their natural condition are a mere multitude;⁴⁰ that the political covenant takes the form of an agreement between 'every several man';⁴¹ and that the act of instituting a sovereign alone has the effect of converting the multitude into a unified body of people.⁴² If we now return to *Leviathan*, however, we find that beyond this point Hobbes's argument begins to move into completely new terrain. Once we recognise, he now suggests, that there is no such thing as the body of the people, we can hope to discredit the entire theory of authorisation and representation that the democratical writers had put into currency in the course of the 1640s.

Hobbes begins by underlining his contention that, because 'the multitude naturally is not *one*, but *many*', the members of the multitude 'cannot be understood for one; but many authors of every thing their representative saith, or doth in their name'.⁴³ We have to envisage 'every man giving their common representer, authority

from himself in particular; and owning all the actions the representer doth' in his name.⁴⁴ According to Hobbes's social ontology, there is no other means for a sovereign to be authorised.

The significance of this way of understanding the covenant becomes apparent as soon as Hobbes turns to consider the radical implications drawn by the democratical writers from their rival account of the unified body of the people as the original author of all power. One inference they had drawn was that, when the people covenant with a king, the body or *universitas* of the people must remain *maior* or greater in standing than the king himself. Any king, as Parker had declared, 'though he be *singulis Major*, yet he is *universis minor*', always lesser in standing than the *universitas* or 'politique corporation' from which his rights and powers are derived.⁴⁵

Hobbes offers no comment on this line of argument in *The Elements* or *De Cive*, but in *Leviathan* he immediately deploys his individualistic analysis of the covenant to wave it aside. '[T]here is little ground', he scornfully replies, 'for the opinion of them that say of sovereign kings, though they be *singulis maiores*, of greater power than every one of their Subjects, yet they be *universis minores*, of less power than them all together'.⁴⁶ The reason is that, because there is no such thing as the *universitas* or body of the people, we can only make sense of the statement in one of two equally unsatisfactory ways. One is to suppose that, when the democratical writers talk about 'all together' in contrast with 'every one', they are referring not to the Person into which the multitude transforms itself when it authorises a sovereign representative, but simply to the multitude itself. But if this is so, then their argument can readily be dismissed. 'For if by *all together* they mean not the collective body as one person, then *all together*, and *every one*, signify the same; and the speech is absurd'.⁴⁷ The only alternative is to suppose that, when they say 'all together', they *are* referring to the Person into which the multitude transforms itself by authorising a sovereign representative. But if this is so, then their argument can be no less readily dismissed. For 'if by *all together* they understand them as one Person (which person the sovereign bears), then the power of all together is the same with the sovereigns power; and so again the speech is absurd'.⁴⁸

A second inference drawn by the democratical writers had been that, as Parker expresses it, when the body of the people authorises

a sovereign, it 'may ordaine what conditions, and prefix what bounds it pleases', thereby placing its ruler under an obligation to govern according to the terms of a 'conditionate' trust.⁴⁹ Turning to this argument in chapter xviii, Hobbes seeks to demonstrate that it is even more obviously entangled in absurdity. Suppose the members of the multitude make a covenant with a designated ruler who, after his institution, acts in such a way as to produce 'a breach of the Covenant' to which he had initially agreed.⁵⁰ By this stage the ruler will have entered upon his sovereign rights, in consequence of which every one of his subjects will be obliged to 'own' and 'avouch' whatever actions he may choose to perform in their names, because he will be performing them 'in the person and by the right of every one of them in particular'.⁵¹ But this means that, whatever limitations on his actions he may have accepted beforehand, these agreements will now be null and void because 'what act soever can be pretended by any one of them for breach thereof is the act both of himself, and of all the rest'.⁵² Any subject who now complains about his sovereign's behaviour will be lodging a complaint, ludicrously enough, against himself.

The last and most explosive implication drawn by the democratical writers had been that, as William Prynne had proclaimed in *The Sovereigne Power of Parliaments and Kingdomes* (1643), any king failing to honour the terms of his covenant can be resisted by his own subjects and removed from power 'by necessary defensive Armes'.⁵³ Hobbes recurs to his rival analysis of authorisation to show that this is the greatest absurdity of all. Given that 'every subject is author of the actions of his sovereign', any subject seeking to punish his sovereign will be condemning him, even more ludicrously, for 'actions committed by himself'.⁵⁴

III

The analysis of the political covenant offered by the democratical writers generally formed only the first part of a two-part analysis of how legitimate governments evolve over time. They had usually gone on to postulate that, in order to check the tyranny of kings, the people eventually found it necessary to institute Parliaments as a means of representing themselves and upholding their interests as a whole.

When they say that Parliaments *represent* the people, some of these writers emphasise the idea of representation as the act of picturing persons and things, and accordingly speak of Parliament as an image or likeness of the people as a whole. Henry Parker employs exactly this vocabulary, describing Parliament as a 'representation' of the 'reall body of the people' and as a 'representation' on a smaller scale of 'the whole body of the State'.⁵⁵ He is closely echoed by the author of *A Sovereigne Salve*, who likewise speaks of Parliament as a 'representation' of 'the whole kingdome',⁵⁶ and by a number of other parliamentary writers, including John Goodwin, Charles Herle and Philip Hunton, all of whom describe the two Houses as an image or 'representation' of the kingdom, nation or people at large.⁵⁷

Fundamentally, however, when the parliamentary writers say that Parliament represents the people, what they mean is that it has authority to speak and act in their name. The two Houses of the English Parliament, as Parker puts it in his *Observations*, have been 'vested with a right both to counsell and consent' and 'appeare in the right of the whole Kingdome'.⁵⁸ Philip Hunton later speaks in very similar terms in his *Treatise of Monarchie*. When we say that 'the house of Commons is chosen by the people and they represent the people', we are saying that the members of the Commons have the same 'power to doe an act' as was originally 'in the people' who chose and elected them.⁵⁹

The essence of the constitutional theory put forward by the democratical writers is thus that, to assure peace and avoid tyranny, the best solution is to have a monarchy checked and balanced by representatives of the people. They are exponents, in other words, of the ideal of the mixed constitution. Parker enunciates the ideal in its classic form in his *Observations*, as does Hunton in his *Treatise of Monarchie*. Both contend that sovereignty under the English constitution is in normal circumstances held jointly by the king and the two Houses of Parliament, and that each of these three Estates must give its consent before any proposed enactments can become law.⁶⁰ After the outbreak of English civil war, however, a number of propagandists followed the more aggressive lead offered by Charles Herle in his *Fuller Answer*, of December 1642. Herle accepts that the three Estates must normally work together, but insists that in any disagreement the two Houses must predominate over the will of the crown. The main outcome of the argument I have been tracing was

thus a theory of Parliamentary sovereignty. As Herle concludes, 'the finall and casting result of the States judgement' must always reside 'in the two Houses of Parliament'.⁶¹

Confronting these arguments in book II of *Leviathan*, Hobbes has no quarrel with the claim that Parliaments may be described as representative assemblies, and he agrees that assemblies no less than individuals may be authorised to serve as sovereign representatives.⁶² What he cannot accept is the suggestion that Parliaments can be regarded as images or representations of the whole body of the people. As he has already explained in chapter xvi, there is no such thing as a body of people awaiting representation. Because nothing exists in nature except 'a multitude of men', there is nothing to be pictured or represented except 'every one of that multitude in particular'.⁶³ This commitment prompts Hobbes to question the entire parliamentary analysis of the representation of the people. One of his contributions is a negative one and may be said to take the form of a derisive silence. The parliamentary writers, and later the Levellers, had endlessly debated the question as to what a satisfactory image or representation of the people needs to look like. How many social groups should be included in the picture? How large should the representative body be if it is to speak and act effectively for the 'real' body of the people? How can the correct proportionality be maintained between the features of the representative body and the features of the real body being pictured or represented? These questions all presuppose exactly what Hobbes denies: that civil associations are created out of preexisting and unified bodies of people. So he fails even to acknowledge the resulting debates.

Hobbes's individualistic premises also enable him to make a positive and still more challenging intervention in the debate. The democratic writers had invariably taken it for granted that a satisfactory image or representation of the body of the people must itself be a body of people. By the end of the 1640s this assumption had become so deeply entrenched that we find them referring – in a now obsolete usage – to any body of people with the right to act in the name of a larger body as 'A representative'.⁶⁴ They had come to assume, in other words, that what it *means* for the body of the people to be represented is to have a smaller body of people acting in its name.

Hobbes counters that, since there is nothing to be represented except the individual bodies 'of all and every one of the multitude',

there is no reason why this act of representation should not be performed equally well by an individual body as by a body of people.⁶⁵ He draws this inference as forthrightly as possible when he turns in chapter xix of *Leviathan* to consider the different forms of lawful government: 'It is manifest', he proclaims, 'that men who are in absolute liberty may, if they please, give authority to one man to represent them every one; as well as give such authority to any assembly of men whatsoever; and consequently may subject themselves, if they think good, to a monarch as absolutely as to any other representative'.⁶⁶

In announcing this commitment, Hobbes is not in the least abandoning the idea that what it means to offer a representation of someone or something is to furnish an image or likeness of their external bodily appearance. On the contrary, he already assures us in the opening chapter of *Leviathan* that to speak of 'a representation' is equivalent to speaking of an 'appearance'.⁶⁷ When he speaks more specifically about political representation, he likewise maintains that any magistrate can be characterised as a 'representation' and hence an 'image' of his sovereign.⁶⁸ He adds that any sovereign can in turn be described as a 'representation' of his people, and he cautions such sovereigns against allowing any other representations of the same people to be produced.⁶⁹

For Hobbes, however, what is crucial is that, when we speak of offering a representation of the people, we cannot be referring to the act of picturing a unified body, but only to the act of picturing the individual members of the multitude. But if this is so, then there is no reason why this act of representation should not be performed by an individual body with a representative character. Hobbes's key concept is thus that of *representativeness*. He maintains, that is, that one way to represent the members of a multitude (in the sense of speaking and acting for them) will always be to appoint a single person who can represent (in the sense of offering an image or likeness of) the individuals involved. A satisfactory 'representer', on this analysis, will simply be someone who can stand as a representative person, a person representative of each and every individual who is being represented.

So confidently does Hobbes set aside the usual corporatist pieties that it seems natural to ask if there may have been any obvious precedents for his line of thought. One intriguing possibility is that he may

have been influenced by the English covenanting theologians of the early seventeenth century.⁷⁰ A number of puritan divines, including Paul Bayne, William Bridge and Richard Sibbes, had developed out of Lutheran sources an argument about Adam and Christ as 'common persons' representative of all mankind. The pioneer among these writers was William Perkins, but perhaps the most suggestive development of their ideas can be found in Thomas Goodwin's treatise of 1642 entitled *Christ Set Forth*, to which Hobbes's analysis of representativeness in *Leviathan* bears some astonishingly close resemblances.

The figure of Adam, according to Goodwin, was the first '*Common person* representing all Man-kind', while the figure of Christ was the second '*Common person* representing us'.⁷¹ One of the senses in which they were common persons is that both embodied the characteristics common to us all.⁷² They may thus be said to constitute an image or representation of each one of us. As Goodwin explicitly says of Adam, he is 'not to be considered as a *single Man*, but as one that was *All men*, by way of representation'.⁷³ Goodwin proceeds to infer that, because of their representativeness, Adam and Christ were in turn able to represent us in the sense of bearing our persons and acting in our names. He goes so far as to suggest that Christ 'had no other end to come downe into this world, but to sustaine our persons, and to act our parts'.⁷⁴ Both he and Adam acted representatively, and hence in the name of us all. We can therefore think of ourselves as 'included, and involved in them', while they may be said to be 'standing for all the rest', who are 'typified out' by them.⁷⁵ As Goodwin concludes, it is because Christ was 'a Common person representing us' that we are 'virtually, and representatively sanctified in him'.⁷⁶

While these are extraordinarily suggestive passages, the idea of Hobbes as a close reader of such theological texts may seem implausible.⁷⁷ If there is a more likely source of inspiration, it may perhaps be found in Dudley Digges's analysis of political representation in his treatise of 1643, *The Unlawfulnessse of Subjects taking up Armes*.⁷⁸ Digges speaks about the representativeness of kings in the course of countering the parliamentary suggestion that they are *maior singulis sed minor universis*. He responds that this doctrine is 'evidently false' because any supreme ruler possesses the entire power of the multitude and is thus 'the representative all' and 'legally

the whole people'.⁷⁹ Later he recurs to the point when summarising his reasons for believing that in the case of England 'the King is not *minor universes*'.⁸⁰ 'There is a great difference', he repeats, 'between the reall and representative all.' Where the king is absolute, 'there he is *Populus Anglicanus*, legally *the English Nation*', and in that case we may say that 'the King is the whole people, and what he doth is legally their Act'.⁸¹

If we now return to *Leviathan*, we find Hobbes speaking in almost identical terms. He enthusiastically endorses the key assumption that it is possible for a single individual to exhibit general representativeness. He repeatedly affirms that a sovereign monarch can stand as a 'person representative', as 'one representative person', as 'the person representative of all and every one of the multitude'.⁸² It is always possible, that is, for an individual sovereign to be 'representative of the whole number', thereby typifying or exemplifying them all.⁸³ Closely echoing the language of the covenanting theologians, he adds that 'the king of any country' can therefore be described as 'the *public* person' who is 'representative of all his own subjects'.⁸⁴

As this analysis reveals, Hobbes takes it for granted – as did the covenanting theologians – that the features of the multitude requiring to be pictured or represented are common to everyone, men and women alike. One implication is that the multitude can equally well be represented by a queen regnant as by a king. The frontispiece of *Leviathan* admittedly suggests that Hobbes's own preference may be for the representative person to be a man.⁸⁵ But he is careful to allow that a woman can equally well stand as the person representative of us all.⁸⁶ He even suggests that, because women are sometimes more prudent than men, and because prudence is self-evidently a desirable attribute in a representative, women may in some cases be better suited than men to exercise dominion over others.⁸⁷

Hobbes also agrees that, because a single person can be typical or representative of us all, such a person can in turn serve as what he describes – again following the covenanting theologians – as our 'common representer' or 'common representative'.⁸⁸ Here Hobbes has a more general as well as a more specific claim to make. His general claim is simply that any natural person can be assigned the right to speak and act in the name of us all, and can therefore serve as 'an absolute representative to all intents and purposes'.⁸⁹ As we have seen, however, Hobbes also believes that, when the members

of the multitude authorise someone to serve as their sovereign representative, this decision has the effect of transforming them into one Person, since it has the effect of endowing them with a single will and voice. His more specific claim is thus that the Person in whose name the sovereign acquires the right to speak and act will be the Person engendered by the multitude out of its agreement to be represented. As he expresses the point at the outset of chapter xviii, the sovereign is assigned 'the *right to present* the person' that the multitude thereby brings into existence.⁹⁰

As we have seen, the upshot of the argument presented by the democratical writers had been that the best form of government must be a mixed monarchy. The people of England, they had added, eventually succeeded in establishing just such a monarchy, one in which the people were able to institute a representative assembly to check and balance the powers of their kings. Turning to this final argument, Hobbes abandons his normally objective manner of writing and allows himself to respond in what appears to be a tone of real outrage:⁹¹

I know not how this, so manifest a truth, should of late be so little observed; that in a monarchy, he that had the sovereignty from a descent of 600 years, was alone called sovereign, had the title of Majesty from every one of his subjects, and was unquestionably taken by them for their king, was notwithstanding never considered as their representative.

What the democratical writers completely fail to acknowledge, Hobbes is claiming, is that the act of instituting the monarchy of which king Charles I was the eventual inheritor was *already* the act of authorising a representative.

Once we recognise this cardinal truth, we can readily see according to Hobbes that the theories of mixed monarchy propounded by the democratical writers are dangerously confused. He begins by referring to the most familiar version of the theory, according to which 'the power of making laws' is made to depend (as he scornfully puts it) on 'the accidental consent' of one man with two separate representative assemblies.⁹² This system requires that 'the king bear the person of the people' while 'the general assembly bear also the person of the people' and 'another assembly bear the person of a part of the people.'⁹³ But this arrangement cannot be described as a viable system of 'mixed monarchy' because it is not a viable system of

government at all.⁹⁴ The effect is to institute 'not one person, nor one Sovereign, but three Persons, and three Sovereigns', thereby creating 'not one independent Common-wealth, but three independent factions', a perfect recipe for chaos and civil war.⁹⁵

Hobbes admits, however, that this is not the understanding of mixed monarchy most favoured by the democratical writers. As we have seen, they had generally maintained that there are only two elements in the mixture, king and Parliament, and that Parliament as the representative assembly of the sovereign people must predominate over the king. Hobbes replies that this is simply to repeat the same mistake. When the people of England instituted their monarchy, they granted to their kings 'the *right to present* the person of them all'.⁹⁶ But 'where there is already erected a Sovereign Power, there can be no other Representative of the same people, but onely to certain particular ends, by the Sovereign limited'.⁹⁷ The reason, Hobbes reminds us, is that otherwise the effect will be 'to erect two sovereigns, and every man to have his person represented by two actors'.⁹⁸ The only possible outcome will again be war, an outcome 'contrary to the end for which all sovereignty is instituted'.⁹⁹

What, then, is the true status of Parliaments within hereditary monarchies? Turning to this question in chapter xxii, Hobbes again underlines the absurdity of supposing that they can ever be representative assemblies in the sense of having an independent right to speak and act in the name of everyone. The reason, he repeats, is that the monarch will already be 'the absolute representative of all the subjects', from which it follows that 'no other can be representative of any part of them, but so far forth, as he shall give leave'.¹⁰⁰ Hobbes's answer is thus that Parliaments can never amount to anything more than purely consultative bodies that monarchs may choose to summon from time to time if they happen to want some information or advice.

This is an astonishingly reactionary response. Despite everything that had happened in the 1640s, Hobbes is simply reverting to the position adopted by the most high-flying defenders of divine right at the start of the civil war. There can be little doubt, however, that he fully intended to adopt as deflating a tone as possible in confronting the theory of Parliamentary sovereignty that had triumphed in the intervening years. He is willing, of course, to allow that any sovereign monarch, should he happen to think fit, may choose 'to give

command to the towns and other several parts of their territory, to send to him their deputies, to inform him of the condition and necessities of the subjects, or to advise with him for the making of good laws, or for any other cause'.¹⁰¹ He is even willing to concede that we can think of such deputies as representatives of the people so that when summoned and brought together they may be said to constitute 'a body politic, representing every subject of that dominion'.¹⁰² But he is unrepentant in insisting that we cannot possibly think of them as having an independent right at any stage to speak and act in the name of the populace as a whole. As he never tires of reminding us, to grant them this status would be to institute 'two sovereigns over the same people, which cannot consist with their peace'.¹⁰³

IV

Hobbes's theory of representative government might appear to leave him with an awkward difficulty. Of whom, on his account, is sovereignty to be predicated? To put the question the other way round – as Henry Parker had done in his *Observations* – who is 'the proper Subject' of sovereign power?¹⁰⁴ The defenders of divine right had responded that sovereignty is the defining attribute of kings. But according to Hobbes no king enjoys a status any higher than that of an authorised representative. The democratical writers had retorted that the body of the people is the original and natural subject of sovereignty. But according to Hobbes there is no such thing as the body of the people. So if sovereignty is the property neither of the king nor of the people, who can possibly lay claim to it?

To this conundrum Hobbes supplies an epoch-making answer. To see how he arrives at it, we need to begin by recalling two distinctive features of his analysis of the covenant. The first is that, when the members of the multitude authorise a man or assembly to serve as their representative, the effect is to transform them from a mere aggregation into one Person because they are now endowed with a single will and voice.¹⁰⁵ Hobbes's other distinctive contention is that the sovereign is the representative of the Person engendered or 'generated' by the multitude out of this agreement to be represented. When, in short, the members of a multitude institute a sovereign, they become one Person and acquire a representative to 'bear' or 'carry' or 'present' that Person at one and the same time.¹⁰⁶

What we need to know, therefore, is the name of the Person engendered by the multitude out of their agreement to authorise a representative. This will be to know the true subject of the sovereignty that the sovereign representer merely holds the right to exercise. Hobbes finally lets us into the secret in the pivotal and magnificently resonant passage in chapter xvii in which he describes the moment when the political covenant takes place. When the members of the multitude agree 'every man with every man' to authorise an individual or an assembly to represent them, the name of the Person they generate is 'a COMMONWEALTH, in Latin CIVITAS'.¹⁰⁷ Hobbes thereupon summarises his doctrine in two crucial definitions that immediately follow. First we are told that 'a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE, (in Latin CIVITAS)'¹⁰⁸ can be defined as '*one person, of whose acts a great multitude, by mutual covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the author*'.¹⁰⁹ Then we are told that the name of the person who 'bears' or 'carries' this Person is the sovereign, who may consequently be said to '*present the person*' of the Commonwealth or State.¹¹⁰ As Hobbes later confirms, the sovereign may therefore be described as '*the public person*' who serves as 'the representant of the commonwealth'.¹¹¹

It is true that the living person of the sovereign is always liable to occlude the purely fictional Person of the Commonwealth or State. As Hobbes acknowledges, 'a commonwealth, without sovereign power is but a word, without substance, and cannot stand'.¹¹² But this consideration only renders him the more anxious to insist that sovereigns are nothing more than actors who body forth the actions of Commonwealths.¹¹³ When a natural person or assembly of persons receives authorisation to represent a Commonwealth, the actions they perform in the name of the Commonwealth will always be attributable to the Commonwealth itself. Hobbes makes this commitment unambiguously clear at the outset of his discussion of civil law in chapter xxvi. Although the Commonwealth 'can do nothing but by the Person that Represents it' the Commonwealth remains the Legislator, and 'the name of the person Commanding' is '*persona civitatis*, the person of the commonwealth'.¹¹⁴ We may therefore say – and Hobbes repeats the phrase throughout the chapter¹¹⁵ – that civil laws are always 'the commands of the commonwealth', and that it is only 'the commonwealth, and his command, that maketh law'.¹¹⁶

Hobbes tells us in the Epistle Dedicatory to *Leviathan* that 'I speak not of the men, but (in the Abstract) of the Seat of Power'.¹¹⁷ He concludes by insisting that this seat is occupied not by any natural person or body of persons, but rather by the disembodied and fictional Person whose generic name is the State.¹¹⁸ However, he is conventional enough to believe that, like the offspring of any lawful union, the Person 'generated' by the union of the multitude deserves its own name as well. Following out his metaphor of marriage and procreation, he accordingly goes on to perform the appropriate act of baptism. He announces in his gravest tones that 'this is the generation of that great LEVIATHAN, or rather (to speak more reverently) of that *Mortal God*, to which wee owe under the *Immortal God*, our peace and defence'.¹¹⁹

Hobbes's allusion is to the sea monster described in chapter 41 of the Book of Job, which he treats as an image of terrifying and overwhelming strength. The claim that we need to submit to such an absolute form of power had been denounced by the newly sovereign House of Commons as recently as its *Declaration* of March 1649. 'Such an *unaccountable Officer*', Parliament had warned, would be 'a strange *Monster* to be permitted by mankind'.¹²⁰ Hobbes unhesitatingly picks up and hurls back the taunt. The main burden of his political theory is that we have no option but to permit our sovereign to personate just such a monster if we are to have any prospect of living together in security and peace.

NOTES

1. For especially valuable attempts to explicate Hobbes's argument in this chapter see Pitkin 1967, Gauthier 1969, Baumgold 1988, Runciman 1997 and 2000.
2. *Lev.*, xvi, 1, 2, 80/101.
3. For a fuller analysis of the complications raised by Hobbes's initial statement, see Skinner 2002, esp. 181–3, 187–90.
4. See Hobbes 1841, 123 on the *persona repraesentativa*.
5. *Lev.*, xvi, 4, 81/101.
6. *Lev.*, xvi, 11, 81/103.
7. *Lev.*, xvi, 11, 81/103.
8. *Lev.*, xvii, 13, 87/109.
9. See Hobbes 1969, 104, 110. Cf. also Hobbes 1983, II.III, 100, where he uses the verb *reliquere*, and V.XI, 134, where he uses *decedere*.

10. See Hobbes 1969, 104, 110.
11. Hobbes fully works out this analysis only in the case of what he calls 'Common-wealth by *Institution*', not in the case of 'Commonwealth by *Acquisition*'. See *Lev.*, xvii, 15, 88/110. I therefore confine myself in what follows to commenting on the former case.
12. [Parker] 1642, 1, 2, 3.
13. [Anon] *Maximes Unfolded*. 1643, 14.
14. Bridge, 1643, 3.
15. [Hunton] 1644, 27, 31.
16. *Lev.*, xvii, 6, 90/112.
17. *Lev.*, xvi, 6, 81/102.
18. *Lev.*, xvi, 3, 80/101.
19. *Lev.*, xvi, 3, 80/101.
20. *Lev.*, xvi, 3, 80/101.
21. *Lev.*, xvi, 3, 80/101.
22. *Lev.*, xvi, 3, 80/101.
23. *Lev.*, xvi, 3, 80/101.
24. See, for example, Gauthier 1969, 99, 120, 126; Zarka 1999, 325, 333.
25. *Lev.*, xxix, 14, 171/215.
26. [Parker] 1642, 44.
27. *Lev.*, xiii, 12, 63/78.
28. *Lev.*, xiii, 9, 62/76.
29. *Lev.*, xiii, 8, 61/76.
30. [Parker] 1642, 18 and cf. pp. 1–2.
31. [Parker] 1642, 26.
32. *Lev.*, xviii, 3, 88/111.
33. *Lev.*, xviii, 4, 89/111.
34. *Lev.*, xvii, 13, 88/109.
35. *Lev.*, xvi, 15, 82/104.
36. *Lev.*, xvi, 13, 82/104.
37. *Lev.*, xvii, 13, 88/109.
38. *Lev.*, xvi, 13, 82/104.
39. *Lev.*, xvi, 13, 82/104.
40. Hobbes 1969, 104, 108–9; Hobbes 1983, 136–7.
41. Hobbes 1969, 119; cf. Hobbes 1983, 133.
42. Hobbes 1969, 103, 108–9; Hobbes 1983, 133–4.
43. *Lev.*, xvi, 14, 82/104.
44. *Lev.*, xvi, 14, 82/104.
45. [Parker] 1642, 1, 2.
46. *Lev.*, xviii, 18, 93/116.
47. *Lev.*, xviii, 18, 93/116.

48. *Lev.*, xviii, 18, 93/116.
49. [Parker] 1642, 2, 4.
50. *Lev.*, xviii, 4, 89/111.
51. *Lev.*, xviii, 4, 89/111.
52. *Lev.*, xviii, 4, 89/111.
53. Prynne 1643, 1, 91.
54. *Lev.*, xviii, 7, 90/113.
55. [Parker] 1642, 15, 45.
56. A Sovereigne Salve, 8.
57. John Goodwin 1642, 2; [Herle] 1643, 12; [Hunton] 1643, 47.
58. [Parker] 1642, 9–10.
59. [Hunton] 1643, 47.
60. [Parker] 1642, 16. But Parker adds (pp. 16, 34) that in emergencies the two Houses of Parliament can act without the concurrence of the king. Cf. [Hunton] 1643, 27–9, who refuses to concede that, even in emergencies, any one element can predominate.
61. [Herle] 1643, 2.
62. *Lev.*, xviii, 1–4, 16.
63. *Lev.*, xvi, 13, 82/104.
64. See, for example, the *Act Abolishing the Office of King* in Gardiner 1906, which speaks (p. 386) of the right of the people to be ‘governed by its own representatives or national meeting in council’ and declares (p. 387) that ‘supreme authority’ now resides ‘in this and the successive representatives of the people’.
65. *Lev.*, xix, 1, 94/118.
66. *Lev.*, xix, 3, 94/119.
67. *Lev.*, i, 1, 3/6.
68. *Lev.*, xlv, 16, 358/444.
69. *Lev.*, xix, 3, 94/119; *Lev.*, xxii, 5, 115/146.
70. For this suggestion see Hill 1986, 318–19 and Martinich 1992, 147–50.
71. Thomas Goodwin 1642, 48, 49.
72. See also Bridge 1649, 117, who describes Adam as ‘a Common person’ in that ‘he was made up of *soul* and *body*; and so are we, His body had *legs*, and *arms*, and other *members*; and we have *member* for *member*; we have *head* for *head*, and *arms* for *arms*, and *legs* for *legs*: And so, he sinning, we have *sin* for his *sin*, *pride* for his *pride*, and *unbelief* for his *unbelief*’.
73. Thomas Goodwin 1642, 59.
74. Thomas Goodwin 1642, 60, 58.
75. Thomas Goodwin 1642, 57, 58.
76. Thomas Goodwin 1642, 73.

77. It is evident, however, from Chapter xlii of *Leviathan* that Hobbes must have immersed himself in a wide range of theological texts in the 1640s.
78. See also *An Answer to a Printed Book* 1642 – which has been ascribed to Dudley Digges – for a discussion (pp. 13–14) of the ‘fiction of law’ by which the people are said to accept, and indeed to enact, what is done in their name.
79. [Digges] 1643, 33.
80. [Digges] 1643, 149.
81. [Digges] 1643, 151–2.
82. *Lev.*, xix, 1, 94/118; *Lev.*, xxix, 16, 172/217; *Lev.*, xxv, 11, 134/169.
83. *Lev.*, xxii, 1, 115/146.
84. *Lev.*, xxxv, 15, 219/277.
85. But perhaps the head of the sovereign is shown as that of a man simply because this would have been expected.
86. *Lev.*, xx, 4, 102/128. Hobbes speaks of sovereign Queens in Chapter xx and specifically mentions Queen Elizabeth of England in Chapter xlvii 47 (*Lev.*, xlvii, 20, 34).
87. *Lev.*, xx, 4, 102/128.
88. *Lev.*, xvi, 14, 82/104; *Lev.*, xxv, 11, 134/169; cf. also *Lev.*, xxii, 18, 118/150.
89. *Lev.*, xix, 3, 95/118; *Lev.*, xxii, 5, 115/146; *Lev.*, xxii, 25, 120/152.
90. *Lev.*, xviii, 1, 88/110.
91. *Lev.*, xix, 3, 95/119.
92. *Lev.*, xxix, 16, 171/216.
93. *Lev.*, xxix, 16, 171/217. Hobbes first refers to this version of the theory at *Lev.*, xix, 10, 89/123.
94. *Lev.*, xxix, 16, 172/216.
95. *Lev.*, xxix, 16, 172/217.
96. *Lev.*, xviii, 1, 88/110.
97. *Lev.*, xix, 3, 95/119.
98. *Lev.*, xix, 3, 95/119.
99. *Lev.*, xix, 3, 95/119; see also *Lev.*, xxix, 16, 172/217.
100. *Lev.*, xxii, 5, 115/146.
101. *Lev.*, xxii, 25, 120/152.
102. *Lev.*, xxii, 25, 120/152.
103. *Lev.*, xxii, 25, 120/152.
104. [Parker] 1642, 44.
105. *Lev.*, xviii, 1, 88/110.
106. *Lev.*, xvii, 13, 87/109; *Lev.*, xvii, 14, 88/109; *Lev.*, xviii, 1, 88/110.
107. *Lev.*, xvii, 13, 87/109.
108. For this formula see *Lev.*, Introduction, 1, 1/3.

- 109. *Lev.*, xvii, 13, 87/109.
- 110. *Lev.*, xvii, 14, 88/109.
- 111. *Lev.*, xlii, 130, 317/395.
- 112. *Lev.*, xxxi, 1, 186/234.
- 113. *Lev.*, xxvi, 13, 87/109. See *Lev.*, xxx, 2, 175/219 for a particularly clear distinction between sovereigns and commonwealths, together with the claim that the person of the sovereign always represents the Person of the commonwealth.
- 114. *Lev.*, xxvi, 2, 137/173.
- 115. *Lev.*, xxvi, 11, 140/176; *Lev.*, xxvi, 12, 140/177, and so on.
- 116. *Lev.*, xxix, 6, 168/212; *Lev.*, xxvi, 11, 140/176.
- 117. *Lev.*, [1]/2.
- 118. That Hobbes's State is a Person 'by fiction' is convincingly argued in Runciman 2000.
- 119. *Lev.*, xvii, 13, 87/109.
- 120. *Declaration of March* 1649, 14.

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7 Hobbes on Glory and Civil Strife

Hobbes's readers generally agree on the centrality of the concept of glory in his system as presented in *The Elements of Law* and *De Cive*; but no such consensus exists concerning the relevance of glory in *Leviathan*. The main aim of this chapter is to argue that the significance of glory in *Leviathan* cannot be overemphasised as it not only provides the foundation of Hobbes's political theory, but also furthers our understanding of Hobbes's philosophy of man. This chapter is organised in four sections. I argue in section I that, even though the definition of glory given in *Leviathan* may appear *prima facie* different from that provided in earlier works, the *meaning* of glory remains unchanged: glory is the joy of superiority and as such it implies comparisons between individuals. In section II a comparative analysis of the *status* of glory in *The Elements of Law*, *De Cive*, and *Leviathan* reveals that in the latter Hobbes replaces his former claim that glory is the ultimate motivation of all people with the milder claim that glory motivates some individuals. Section III presents the central claim of this essay that in *Leviathan* glory is the Archimedean point of Hobbes's theory of the state. The behaviour of glory-seekers is identified as the original source of conflict both in the state of nature and in the political state, as well as the reason why nothing less than the absolute, indivisible and irrevocable power of a Leviathan is required to guarantee internal peace. Section IV concludes by exploring some of the implications of the preceding argument and the function of education in the political state.¹

I

The first step towards a proper evaluation of glory in *Leviathan* is to examine the meaning of the term and, in particular, to determine whether *Leviathan* marks a significant change with respect to Hobbes's earlier works. In *Leviathan* Hobbes defines glory as 'Joy arising from the imagination of a man's own power and ability' (*Lev.*, vi, 39, 27/31). In *The Elements of Law* instead, Hobbes states that 'glory . . . is that passion that proceedeth from the . . . conception of our own power above the power of him that contendeth with us.'² The obvious difference is that the latter definition explicitly refers to a comparison between individuals, whereas the former does not. Similarly, in *Leviathan* the basic ingredient of glory (i.e., power) is defined by Hobbes in absolute terms: 'The power of a man (to take it universally) is his present means to obtain some future apparent good' (*Lev.*, x, 1, 41/50), whereas in *The Elements of Law* power is explicitly described as a relational concept: 'power simply is no more, but the excess of power of one above that of another'.³ Finally in *Leviathan* honour, namely the 'manifestation of the value we set on one another' (*Lev.*, x, 17, 42/51), is defined as 'opinion of power' (*Lev.*, x, 48, 45/54), whereas in *The Elements of Law* it is said that 'to honour a man . . . is to conceive or acknowledge, that that man hath the odds or excess of power above him that contendeth or compareth himself'.⁴

The comparative analysis of the definitions of glory, honour and power in *Leviathan* and *The Elements of Law* has led F. S. McNeilly⁵ to claim that in the transition from *The Elements of Law* to *Leviathan* those concepts lose their 'relational' aspect, and that this constitutes a major change in Hobbes's philosophy. But McNeilly's claim that in *Leviathan* glory, power and honour no longer imply comparisons between individuals must be rejected. In fact, there are passages in *Leviathan* where the essentially comparative feature of glory and honour is explicitly stated; for example in chapter xlv we read: 'to honour is to value highly the power of any person, and that such value is measured by our comparing him with others' (*Lev.*, xlv, 12, 357/443); and in chapter xvii we are told that man's 'joy consisteth in comparing himself with other men' (*Lev.*, xvii, 8, 86/108). It is also clear from chapter x that when writing *Leviathan* Hobbes had not changed his view that for a person to honour

another is an admission of inferior power. Indeed even in his later work Hobbes suggests that reference to other individuals is implied in the elation of mind called glory and spells out clearly that power is an inherently relational concept: 'if [power] be not extraordinary, it is useless; for what all have equally is nothing'.⁶

The fact that in *The Elements of Law* and *De Cive* Hobbes states explicitly that glory is the pleasure of superior power, whereas in *Leviathan* he does so only occasionally, is merely the 'compression' – to borrow Maurice Goldsmith's useful terminology⁷ – of an idea that was expounded at length before and not a philosophical departure. There are other examples of compression in *Leviathan*. Hobbes deploys glory-related terms such as pride, ambition and proper esteem, presupposing, and thus omitting, the extensive definitions he had provided in *The Elements of Law*. Thus the word 'pride' is used mainly in a negative sense, as when he condemns people's disregard for equality recommended by the ninth law of nature.⁸ As in previous writings Hobbes uses the word 'ambition' mainly in a pejorative sense. Ambition, defined as 'desire of office' (*Lev.*, vi, 24, 26/30) is the type of glory that Hobbes consistently associates with 'men that have a strong opinion of their wisdom in matter of government' (*Lev.*, xi, 13, 49/60), and thus feel entitled to correct, change and 'innovate' the government of a country. The definition that he offers later in *De Homine*, ambition is 'immoderate love' of political power,⁹ seems an accurate description of the use of the term in *Leviathan*. Only occasionally does Hobbes feel the need to reiterate the views expressed in *The Elements of Law*; for example, he highlights the difference between glory and vain glory, stressing that glory is 'grounded upon the experience of former actions' whereas vain glory is based 'on the flattery of others, or only supposed by [one]self' (*Lev.*, vi, 39, 27/31).

In *Leviathan* Hobbes expands on his views of glorying, honouring and power, explaining the complex relationships between glory, power and honour, on the one hand, and opinion, on the other. Hobbes's argument can be summarised by saying that (i) the good opinion that one has of one's own past actions provides the foundation for glorying, (ii) the good opinion one has of another's abilities is ground for honouring another (*Lev.*, x, 17, 42/50) and (iii) the good opinion others have of one conveys power unto one, in so far as 'reputation of power is power' (*Lev.*, x, 5, 42/51). As the opinion of an

individual about his own power is often biased (*Lev.*, x, 16, 42/51), so the opinion of people about the power of others can also be biased, but biased opinion can nevertheless generate real power or, indeed, take it away. Hobbes remarks, not without irony, that, as a consequence of common opinion, 'the sciences are small power' (*Lev.*, x, 14, 42/51). The foundation of power, honour and glory in people's opinion will remain a constant also in later works: 'the power of the mighty hath no foundation but in the opinion and belief of the people'.¹⁰ Thus, in Hobbes's view, opinion accomplishes two functions: it gives expression to our evaluation of power and it generates new power.

Finally in *Leviathan* Hobbes adds a qualification to the meaning of glory that was missing in his previous works. Here the desire for glory and superiority is distinguished from more innocent desires such as the 'desire of fame after death' and from 'the desire of praise' (*Lev.*, xi, 6, 48/59). Whereas the latter desires may dispose to 'laudable actions' and induce cooperation, for Hobbes glory and ambition dispose to contention, enmity and war. While 'desire of fame after death' may in principle be compatible with risking one's life, for glory-seekers, instead, to be alive is a necessary requirement to experience the elation of superior power and dominion over others. To conclude this section: the meaning of glory in *Leviathan* is the same as in previous works: glory is the joy of superior power. Most of the changes in *Leviathan* on the meaning of glory, honour and power are either 'compressions' or 'expressions' of earlier ideas rather than indications of a novel view.

II

In *The Elements of Law* Hobbes had claimed that *all* human passions derive from the pleasure or displeasure that individuals obtain from being honoured or dishonoured¹¹ and that the life of man has 'no other goal, nor other garland, but being foremost'.¹² In *De Cive* he had stated that 'every pleasure of the mind is either glory ... or ultimately relates to glory'.¹³ It is highly significant that in *Leviathan* Hobbes generally refrains from making such claims and conveys the impression that only some people are glory-seekers. Of course throughout *Leviathan* we can still find traces of the earlier position, for example where Hobbes restates the view, typical of his previous writings, that men 'naturally love ... dominion over others'

(*Lev.*, xvii, 1, 85/106), or where he remarks that 'ambition and covetousness are passions . . . perpetually incumbent and pressing' (*Lev.*, xxvii, 18, 155/195) or where he reiterates the view that the 'business [of the world] consisteth almost in nothing else but a perpetual contention for honour, riches and authority' (*Lev.*, A Review and Conclusion, 3, 389/489). But in spite of the exceptions, the balance of evidence suggests that when writing *Leviathan* Hobbes was no longer certain that glory is the ultimate mover of mankind, or for political reasons did not want to state it. He does not speculate, as in *The Elements of Law*, on what *ultimate* motivation drives people to be magnanimous, covetous, ambitious, pusillanimous and so on. Although in *Leviathan* Hobbes maintains, as in *The Elements of Law*, that charity and magnanimity are honourable, he never states that people are magnanimous or charitable for the sake of honour. Thus it can be argued that in *Leviathan* glory is no longer the *genus*, or ultimate source of all passions and desires, but becomes a *species*, or an instance of human passions.

This different *status* given to glory marks a fundamental change in Hobbes's philosophy of man. Moreover, in spite of Hobbes's recommendation to the reader to use introspection and to 'read himself', in *Leviathan* one notices a subtle shift of emphasis from enquiry into the *inner* thoughts, feelings and motivations of people to careful study of their *observable* behaviour. In *Leviathan*, more than in previous writings, one's pride can be detected in the fact that people blush when they make mistakes, or laugh at other people's shortcomings, or weep when humiliated, or get angry when frustrated. Whereas in *The Elements of Law* Hobbes claims that unlike vain glory, true glory induces the agent to 'aspire' to real actions, in *Leviathan* Hobbes chooses the word 'attempt' to describe the difference between vain and true glory (*Lev.*, vi, 39, 27/31) and a man's attempt is more observable than a man's aspiration. Whereas in the *Elements of Law* felicity was defined as consisting in 'continually out-going the next before'¹⁴ (i.e., by taking the agent's point of view), in *Leviathan* felicity is defined by taking an observer's point of view: 'Felicity is a continual progress of the desire, from one object to another, the attaining of the former being still but the way to the latter' (*Lev.*, xi, 1, 47/57).

Whereas glory loses its central place in the transition from *The Elements of Law* and *De Cive* to *Leviathan*, the same does not apply to

power. However, this should not be taken to imply that in *Leviathan* power replaces glory as the source of human motivation, insofar as in *Leviathan* no concept is raised to the level previously occupied by glory. On the contrary, reasons for 'the perpetual and restless desire of power after power' (*Lev.*, xi, 2, 47/58) are claimed explicitly to vary across individuals. Power in *Leviathan*, unlike glory in *The Elements of Law* and *De Cive*, is not the common drive, nor the greatest pleasure of the mind to which all the other pleasures refer in the end. In *Leviathan* the pursuit of power enables us to explain and predict people's behaviour – be they 'temperate', 'moderate' or glory-seekers – but on its own it does not enable us to understand individual motivation. Whereas Hobbes's occasional remarks in *The Elements of Law* and *De Cive* that some people are not glory-seekers are surprising in the context of the philosophy of man expounded there, in *Leviathan* they are fully consistent with the general argument.

A number of reasons may have induced Hobbes to demote glory from the *genus* of all human motivation to a *species*, or instance, of human passions. First, it may be the case that under the influence of Scepticism, Hobbes became uncertain about the possibility of finding a universal principle of motivation. This supposition is confirmed by the fact that even in later writings such as *Behemoth* Hobbes puts the view that 'we cannot safely judge of men's intentions'.¹⁵ It may be the case that Hobbes, having realised that his claim that glory motivates everyone at all times was objectionable to his readers, decided to replace it with the more agreeable claim that only some individuals are motivated by glory. Third, it cannot be excluded that one factor contributing to Hobbes dropping the assumption of universal glory-seeking behaviour was his loathing of redundancy and his commitment to logical neatness. In fact, all that is required for the Hobbesian state of nature to collapse into a state of perennial war is the existence of a handful of glory-seekers, as Hobbes shows himself to be well aware in his Preface to *De Cive*.¹⁶ In conclusion, in the transition from *The Elements of Law* and *De Cive* to *Leviathan* Hobbes seems to have abandoned the view not only that glory is the common ultimate motivation of all people, but also that such a universal motivation exists. More than ever before in *Leviathan* Hobbes suggests that the motivation of people is varied, changing and unknown. In *Leviathan* no unifying principle

of motivation replaces glory, but the pursuit of power allows us to explain and predict the behaviour of individuals regardless of their motivation.

III

From Strauss to Macpherson, from Oakeshott to McNeilly, many interpreters have highlighted the aspects that the Hobbesian notion of glory shares with concepts such as biblical pride, Aristotelian honour, Baconian vain glory, Machiavellian *gloria*, aristocratic honour and even bourgeoisie greed. Even so, Hobbes is unique in the use he makes of this concept in the construction of his argument. In order to establish the *role* of glory in Hobbes's political theory one needs to examine his account of human conflict as presented in three main places in *Leviathan*: in chapter xiii, where the state of nature is examined, in chapter xxvii, where the reasons for the establishment of the commonwealth are discussed, and in chapter xxvii again where the causes of the dissolution of the political state are listed. This I now propose to do.

In chapter xiii of *Leviathan* Hobbes formulates what can be called a "*three-cause argument*": 'in the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel: first, competition; secondly, diffidence; thirdly, glory. The first, maketh men invade for gain; the second, for safety; and the third, for reputation' (*Lev.*, xiii, 6–7, 61/76). Many of Hobbes's readers have interpreted this quotation as support for the view that in *Leviathan* glory is a possible reason contributing to the state of nature turning into a state of war; and that other important causes of conflict are greed and fear for self-preservation. For example, David Gauthier, although acknowledging that 'contempt' is a source of conflict,¹⁷ singles out scarce resources and fear for self-preservation as explanatory factors for the transformation of the state of nature into a state of war. Specifically, he suggests that fear is 'original' and dependent on scarce natural resources, while competition is 'derivative' (i.e., a product of fear). This line of interpretation usually appeals to the following textual evidence in chapter xiii: 'if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and in the way to their end, which is principally their own conservation, and sometimes their delectation only,

endeavour to destroy or subdue one another' (*Lev.*, xiii, 3, 61/75). This quotation seems to suggest that conflict is 'principally' the result of fear for self-preservation, which in turn derives from the fact that 'two men desire the same thing' insofar as resources are scarce. For Gauthier 'if the state of nature were a state of plenty, then men might refrain from hostility'.¹⁸

Prima facie, the *three-cause argument* that singles out fear, greed and glory as the three sources of conflict may seem at odds with what can be called the *bees-and-ants argument* found in the opening chapter of book II of *Leviathan* (*Lev.*, xvii, 6, 86–7/108). Here Hobbes addresses the problem of why 'certain living creatures (as bees and ants) live sociably one with another... [whereas]... mankind cannot do the same' and claims glory to be *the sole* source of human discord. Before proposing a possible solution to this puzzle, it is worth recalling that the bees-and-ants argument also appears in both *The Elements of Law* and *De Cive*. The main similarity between the bees-and-ants passage in *Leviathan* and previous formulations is that fear for self-preservation and concern for scarce resources are never mentioned by Hobbes as possible causes of human discord; on the contrary, Hobbes suggests that if the sole concern of men were their survival, they would pull their strengths together and would cooperate like bees and ants and live peacefully without the need for artificial covenants and bonds. Indeed, Hobbes points out that unlike 'irrational creatures... man is most troublesome, when he is most at ease; for then it is that he loves to shew his wisdom' (*Lev.*, xvii, 11, 87/108) – a view already present in *The Elements of Law* and *De Cive*. More sharply than in previous versions of the bees-and-ants argument, in *Leviathan* all causes of competition and conflict between men identified by Hobbes are glory-related (*Lev.*, xvii, 7–12, 86–7/108–9):

First,...men are continually in competition for honour and dignity... Secondly,...man whose joy consisteth in comparing himself with other men, can relish nothing but what is eminent... Thirdly,...amongst men there are very many that think themselves wiser, and abler to govern the public, better than the rest; and these strive to reform and innovate, one this way, another that way; and thereby bring it into distraction and civil war... Fourthly...[by the art of words] some men can represent to others that which is good in the likeness of evil, and evil in the likeness of good... discontenting men and troubling their peace at their pleasure.

The bees-and-ants passage in *The Elements of Law* lists the desire for 'private wealth' among the causes of conflict;¹⁹ not so in the corresponding passage in *Leviathan*, where no mention is made of people's greed as a reason of their different behaviour from that of bees and ants. If in *De Cive* Hobbes derives that the human pleasure of possession arises from the pleasure of glory,²⁰ so in the Latin version of *Leviathan* we are told that 'homines inter se de honoribus et dignitate perpetuo contendunt... Homini... in bonis propriis nihil tam jucundum est, quam quod alienis sunt majora'.²¹

Assuming that Hobbes when writing chapter xvii of *Leviathan* could not conceivably have forgotten what he had just claimed four chapters earlier, it follows that we must conclude that the three-cause argument and the bees-and-ants argument do not contradict, but rather complement, each other. Indeed, the common practice of ignoring (or underplaying the importance of) the bees-and-ants argument is not simply a sin of omission, but can affect the correct understanding of Hobbes's state of nature. The bees-and-ants argument sheds light on the three-cause argument insofar as it suggests that in the state of nature glory is the 'original' source of conflict – to borrow Gauthier's terminology – whereas fear is 'derivative'. In the state of nature Hobbesian individuals know that there are some who are glory-seekers and therefore willing to deprive others of their means of survival in order to establish dominion. This engenders fear in everyone and fear in turn spurs people to anticipate and fight. Later in *Leviathan* Hobbes points out that if one day resources were to become insufficient to sustain the whole population, no social contract and no political alchemy could save mankind from war (*Lev.*, xxx, 19, 182/228). The social contract is a solution in a world where resources are limited and yet sufficient, were it not for the presence of glory-seekers who aim at establishing superior power by depriving the rest of what they need.

In view of Thucydides' pervasive influence on Hobbes's thought,²² it does not seem too far-fetched to look at Thucydides' *History* to support the dynamics of the state of nature sketched earlier. On the one hand, as many interpreters have pointed out,²³ Hobbes's three-cause-argument quoted here has a striking resemblance with a passage of Thucydides' *History* where the Athenian ambassadors justify their expansionistic policy in their oration to the Corinthians 'chiefly for fear, next for honour, and lastly for profit' (*EW*, VIII, 81)²⁴ and claim

that 'though overcome by three of the greatest things, honour, fear, and profit, ... [they] have therein done nothing to be wondered at nor beside the manner of men' (*EW*, VIII, 82). On the other hand, in his diagnosis of the Peloponnesian war Thucydides states that 'the truest quarrel, though least in speech, I conceive to be the growth of the Athenian power; which putting the Lacedaemonians into fear necessitated the war' (*EW*, VIII, 27) thereby suggesting that the desire of power of the Athenians was the original source of conflict, whereas the fear of the Lacedaemonians was derivative – this being the pattern followed by Hobbes in his account of the state of nature, in my view.

In the state of nature neither fear nor greed are the passions that blind Hobbesian men about their natural equal vulnerability; rather, it is 'vain conceit' that makes them think that they are superior: 'that which may perhaps make equality incredible is but a vain conceit of one's own wisdom' (*Lev.*, xiii, 2, 61/75). It is vain glory that gives them hope and confidence to win; it is vain glory that does not allow them to discern the equal natural power 'but by the event of battle' (*Lev.*, xiv, 31, 70/88). It is pride that does not allow them to understand the ninth law of nature that recommends 'that every man acknowledge the other for his equal by nature' (*Lev.*, xv, 21, 77/96). Whereas 'the passions that incline men to peace are fear of death, desire of ... commodious living and ... hope' (*Lev.*, xiii, 14, 63/78), it is 'pride and other passions [that] have compelled him to submit himself to government' (*Lev.*, xxviii, 27, 166/210). For Hobbes the desire for glory and superiority is the fundamental cause of discord in the state of nature, as well as the primary source of dissolution of political states. Even here Hobbes follows Thucydides who identified '*desire of rule*, out of avarice and ambition' as the source of the sedition at Corcyra (*EW*, VIII, 350, emphasis in the original).

In all his theoretical and historical accounts of the dissolution of commonwealths, ambition is singled out by Hobbes as the prime mover of rebellion. In *Behemoth* Hobbes remarks that 'all this stubbornness and contumacy toward the King and his laws, is nothing but pride of heart and ambition, or else imposture'²⁵ and points out that in the civil war 'the chief leaders were ambitious ministers and ambitious gentlemen'.²⁶ Even in the *Correspondence* Hobbes points to 'disputes for precedence' as 'the causes of civil wars'.²⁷ And in chapter xxix of *Leviathan* the 'poison' that brings about the disease

and eventually the death of the commonwealth is injected into the body politic by 'seditious doctrines' that challenge one by one the characteristics of Hobbesian sovereignty, namely, its absoluteness, indivisibility and irrevocability. The doctrines 'that every private man is judge of good and evil actions', that

whatsoever a man does against his conscience is sin... that he that hath the sovereign power is subject to the civil laws... that every private man has an absolute propriety in his goods, such as excludeth the right of the sovereign... that the sovereign power may be divided (*Lev.*, xxix, 6–12, 168–70/212)

are spread by those who think themselves wiser than the rest and who are led by their desire to rule to weakening the power of the state. If Hobbes claims in *Leviathan* that 'of the passions that most frequently are the causes of crime, one is vain glory or a foolish overrating of their own worth' (*Lev.*, xxvii, 13, 154/194), he likewise suggests that in the case of the greatest of crimes against the state the original motivation is the personal ambition and ungrounded self-belief of some. In *Leviathan* it is 'ambition' that motivates men to be 'kinder to the government of an assembly, whereof they may hope to participate, than of monarchy, which they despair to enjoy' (*Lev.*, xviii, 4, 89/111); and ambition is what leads men to regard sovereignty as tyranny.

The great Leviathan is given by Hobbes the task of channelling the desire for glory by means of rewards and punishments; so in chapter xviii Hobbes explains that

to the sovereign is committed the power of rewarding with riches or honour; and of punishing with corporal or pecuniary punishment, or with ignominy... [C]onsidering what values men are naturally apt to set upon themselves, what respect they look for from others, and how little they value other men; from whence continually arise amongst them, emulation, quarrels, factions, and at last war... it is necessary that there be laws of honour, and a public rate of the worth of... men. (*Lev.*, xviii, 15, 93/114)

But rewards and punishment are not the only way in which Leviathan can restrain the ambitious. Education, whether by means of good books, or good universities, or good teachers, or censorship of seditious doctrines, is given by Hobbes the primary role of enabling the Leviathan to accomplish his task as 'King of the Proud' (*Lev.*, xxviii,

27, 166/210). To conclude: in spite of the fact that in the transition from *The Elements of Law* and *De Cive* glory is no longer the ultimate motivation of all but only of some, its role is the very same in *Leviathan* as in earlier works. Desire of glory is the original source of competition, sedition and war and the reason why nothing less than the absolute, indivisible and irrevocable power of Leviathan can maintain peace among men.

IV

So far I have tried to argue that the significance of glory in *Leviathan* is paramount insofar as this concept underpins Hobbes's theory of the state (Section III). A comparative analysis of glory in *Leviathan* and previous works is also important because it affords insights into some of the continuities (Section I) and developments (Section II) of Hobbes's philosophy of man. Finally, a careful analysis of the concept of glory is relevant because it questions the validity of a number of claims traditionally made about Hobbes's theory of human nature, namely, that it assumes independent individuals with given aims and desires,²⁸ that it is 'reductive'²⁹ and unduly pessimistic.

To begin with, a study of the glory-seeker challenges the view that the Hobbesian individual is an independent, self-contained entity. Although glory-seeking 'men have no pleasure, but on the contrary a great deal of grief, in keeping company' (*Lev.*, xiii, 5, 61/75), nevertheless they need others to experience the pleasure of superiority and dominion. If the rest of mankind were to disappear, the glory-seeker would have no desires and no 'man [can] any more live, whose desires are at an end' (*Lev.*, xi, 1, 47/57). Of course, the Hobbesian glory-seeker is interested in others only because he is interested in himself; but this notwithstanding, he is neither self-contained nor independent. He is constantly observing and evaluating the world in which he lives, the reason being that the set of glory-yielding abilities and actions is not fixed and immutable, but changes in society, with the needs and opinions of people: 'The value or worth of a man is . . . not absolute, but a thing dependent on the need and judgement of another' (*Lev.*, x, 16, 42/51). As people honour those they value and need and as being honoured is a source of glorying, then anybody who is seeking glory must be able to evaluate other people's needs and satisfy them. As 'reputation of power is power' (*Lev.*, x, 5, 41/51),

glory-seekers must pay careful attention to people's opinion. Hence the glory-seeker must be perceptive, flexible and adaptable. These are the very characteristics that make him potentially responsive to education.

Although already in *De Cive* Hobbes had pointed out that man can be made fit for society by means of education, there he had suggested that rewards and punishment are the most effective means by which the state can channel glory-seeking behaviour in a way that is not detrimental to society. In *Leviathan*, however, Hobbes expresses a greater faith in the effectiveness of education than ever before³⁰ and writes: 'Therefore I think it [the *Leviathan*] may be profitably printed, and more profitably taught in the Universities. . . . And by that means the most men, knowing their duties, will be the less subject to serve the ambition of a few discontented persons, in their purposes against the state' (*Lev.*, A Review and Conclusion, 16, 395/496). It can be seen that now the role of education is that of alerting the innocent to the plots of the ambitious. But in *Leviathan* Hobbes puts forward also the view that, with the exception of the few who cannot be taught because they are '*stubborn, insociable, forward, intractable*' (*Lev.*, xv, 17, 76/96), even the glory-seeker can be reformed with the help of good books, good teachers, good sermons and the like.

In *Leviathan* Hobbes remarks that people's dispositions and manners derive partly from nature and partly from education, but he does not explain in any detail to what extent nurture can change nature. Later in *De Homine*, considered by some³¹ as his last word on human nature, Hobbes is much less vague and writes: 'men's dispositions . . . arise from a sixfold source: namely constitution of the body, experience, habit, fortune, opinion one has of oneself and authorities. . . . When these things change dispositions change also'.³² Of the six sources of disposition listed here only the constitution of the body is independent of social interaction and so man, as described in *De Homine*, appears to be mainly a product of nurture. Although there is scope for debate, it seems to me that the man of *Leviathan* is closer to the man-as-product-of-nurture described in *De Homine* than to the man-as-product-of-nature found in *The Elements of Law*. Of the six sources of disposition listed in *De Homine*, it can be observed that many are dormant in the state of nature as described in *Leviathan*: there is no 'habit', but only uncertainty; there are no

'authorities', no family, no shared values, but '*every private man is judge of good and evil actions ... in the condition of meer nature*' (*Lev.*, xxix, 6, 168/212). In the state of nature man is truly the product of nature. After the creation of the state, however, all six sources become active and so the citizen becomes mainly a product of nurture because his behaviour is affected by the books he reads, the sermons he listens to, the habits he observes, by the laws – in a word, by his education, broadly interpreted. It follows that the ambitious citizen who wants 'to innovate' the state is more the product of bad education, bad universities and bad ecclesiastics, than of immutable human nature.

In *Leviathan* (as well as in *Behemoth*³³), Hobbes points out that experience is unreliable, as men have short memories and learn from experience whatever suits them: 'the Civill warres have not yet sufficiently taught men' their civic duties (*Lev.*, A Review and Conclusion, 6, 390/490). Hence the responsibility of moulding man lies almost entirely with 'authorities', teachers and books. Alasdair MacIntyre claims that

criticism of our desires and their rational remoulding have no place in the Hobbesian system. It follows that, inevitably, our desires are for one individual object after another; and thus desires cannot include the desire for a certain kind of life, the desire that our desires should be of a certain kind.³⁴

This assessment of Hobbesian man may find some textual support in the first chapters of *Leviathan*, but the man that emerges from the whole discourse is much more complex. Hobbes ascribes to man the ability to plan his future life and to create and maintain the conditions of peace. The very fact that Hobbes pays so much attention to education is because he believes in the remoulding of desires. While maintaining that the passions are immutable and 'the same in all men', Hobbes believes that 'the objects of the passions, which are the things desired' depend on 'the constitution individual, and particular education' (*Lev.*, Introduction, 3, 1–2/4) and as such are not fixed and predetermined. That Hobbes hoped that universities would adopt his *Leviathan* is a sign that for him the shaping of preferences, inclinations and desires could and should be achieved not through indoctrination but via rational discourse. This is, in fact, the way he saw his own *Leviathan*, written by his own admission

'in order that he might be understood by all thinking men of sound judgement, in prose that was simple and direct, *not in rhetoric*'.³⁵

It is not just the moderate and the temperate but also the glory-seeker that Hobbes is addressing, for even the latter has moments of calm reflection. The specific message of *Leviathan* for the glory-seeker is that outside the political state all glory is vain, as men are equal in their ability to defend their own lives and to endanger the life of others. Not even the dominion of man over woman is achievable in nature:

whereas some have attributed the dominion to the man only, as being of the more excellent sex; they misreckon in it. For there is not always that difference of strength, or prudence between the man and the woman as that the right can be determined without war. (*Lev.*, xx, 4, 102/128)³⁶

Although superiority cannot be achieved in natural conditions, it can be achieved artificially; for with the introduction of private property and common values the state establishes the conditions necessary to deciding 'who is the better man'. 'The question "who is the better man?" has no place in the condition of mere nature', Hobbes claims, 'where . . . all men are equal. The inequality that now is, has been introduced by the laws civil' (*Lev.*, xv, 21, 76–7/96). Challenging the power of the state is the only form of glory that is forbidden, for in that challenge lies the seeds of the collapse of the state and the return to the state of nature. It is his belief in education, reformation and the rational remoulding of desires that reveals the optimistic aspects of Hobbes's enterprise. The fact that he paid so much attention to glory-seekers is not a sign of pessimism either, for in *Leviathan* he makes it clear that glory is an instance of human motivation that affects only some and not all of the time. The fact that this passion runs throughout the pages of *Leviathan* like Ariadne's thread and binds the argument together, whereas most of the other forty passions listed in chapter vi are never mentioned again, is not a sign of pessimism but confirms instead (if confirmation were needed) that Hobbes's interest in human nature is exclusively political. Love, generosity, loyalty, charity, magnanimity, pity – common as these passions may be – do not explain why people need laws and punishment, why there are conflicts and wars; why in human history peace has never lasted very long. In *Leviathan* glory

is the passion that sparks off human conflict and fear, which is its derivative, is the passion that drives man to find a solution.

In conclusion, attention to the concept of glory in *Leviathan* not only sheds light on Hobbes's own understanding of the ultimate cause of conflicts and civil wars but also brings to the fore his optimistic conviction that if good teachers and good books were to teach people the reasons for the need of civil obedience, this knowledge would protect them in the foreseeable future from the rhetoric of glory-seeking demagogues.

NOTES

1. Some of the ideas in this chapter draw on my *Thomas Hobbes and the Political Philosophy of Glory* (London: Macmillan/New York: St Martin's Press, 2000).
2. Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law. Natural and Politic*, 2nd edn, edited by Ferdinand Tönnies (London: Frank Cass, 1969), 36–7.
3. Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, 34.
4. Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, 34–5.
5. F. S. McNeilly, *The Anatomy of Leviathan* (London: Macmillan, 1968), especially Chapter 6.
6. Thomas Hobbes, *De Homine*, in *Man and Citizen*, edited by Bernard Gert (New York: Anchor Books, 1972), 31–85, 49.
7. I am referring to Maurice Goldsmith's remark that *The Elements of Law* 'is often plainer than *Leviathan*; occasionally it expresses a point that *Leviathan* compresses'. 'Introduction' by Maurice Goldsmith to *The Elements of Law*, xxi.
8. Hobbes occasionally breaks this rule as where he says that a minority of people are driven by 'pride or glory' not to break their covenants (*Lev.*, xiv, 31, 70/87).
9. Thomas Hobbes, *De Homine*, 60.
10. Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth, or the Long Parliament*, 2nd edn, edited by Ferdinand Tönnies (London: Frank Cass, 1969), 16. On opinion in *Behemoth*, see Tomaž Mastnak, 'Behemoth: Democraticals and Religious Fanatics', *Filozofski Vestnik (Acta Philosophica)*, XXIV (2) (2003), 139–68.
11. Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, 36.
12. Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, 47.
13. Thomas Hobbes, *On the Citizen (De Cive)*, edited by Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 23.

14. Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, 48.
15. Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 72; see also 37 and 29.
16. Thomas Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, 11.
17. David Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan. The Moral and Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 16. For a critique of the game-theoretic approach to Hobbes see Gabriella Slomp and Manfredi La Manna, 'Hobbes, Harsanyi, and the Edge of the Abyss', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 29 (1996), 47–70.
18. David Gauthier *The Logic of Leviathan*, 18.
19. Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, 102.
20. Thomas Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, 71.
21. Thomae Hobbes, *Opera Philosophica quae latine scripsit omnia*, In unum corpus primum collecta studio et labore Gulielmi Molesworth, vol. III (Londini: Apud Joannem Bohn, MDCCXLI). (Latin *Leviathan*), 129–30; Curley's translation: 'to a man nothing is so pleasant in his own goods as that they are greater than those of others', xvii, 8, footnote 4, 108.
22. In the *Correspondence* we learn that Hobbes sometimes referred jokingly to himself as Thucydides (see letter 28): Thomas Hobbes, *The Correspondence*, vol. I: 1622–59, edited by Noel Malcolm, volume VI of the Clarendon Edition of the Philosophical Works of Thomas Hobbes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).
23. See, for example, Richard Schlatter, 'Thomas Hobbes and Thucydides', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 6 (1945), 350–62, and his 'Introduction' *Hobbes's Thucydides* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1975); C. W. Brown, 'Thucydides, Hobbes, and the Derivation of Anarchy', *History of Political Thought*, 8 (1987) 33–62; G. Klosko and D. Rice, 'Thucydides' and Hobbes's State of Nature', *History of Political Thought*, 6 (1985), 405–9. I have discussed Hobbes's and Thucydides' views on glory in 'Hobbes, Thucydides and the Three Greatest Things', *History of Political Thought*, 9 (1990), 565–86.
24. Thomas Hobbes, *The History of the Grecian War written by Thucydides*, vol. I, reprinted in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, edited by William Molesworth (London: John Bohn, 1843), vol. VIII, henceforth *EW*, VIII.
25. Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 53.
26. Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 23. I have discussed the role of ambition in *Behemoth* in 'Hobbes's *Behemoth* on Ambition, Greed, and Fear', *Filozofski Vestnik (Acta Philosophica)*, 24 (2) (2003), 189–204.
27. Thomas Hobbes, *The Correspondence*, vol. I, 120.
28. Preston King, *The Ideology of Order* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1974), 190.

29. A. MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (London: Routledge, 1967), 138.
30. '[I]t is not difficult to see the entire project of *Leviathan* and *Behemoth* as an exercise in civic education' in Patricia Springborg, 'Behemoth and Hobbes's "Science of Just and Unjust"', *Filozofski Vestnik (Acta Philosophica)*, XXIV (2) (2003), 267–89, 274.
31. Bernard Gert, 'Introduction', *Thomas Hobbes. Man and Citizen* (New York: Doubleday, 1972), 3.
32. Thomas Hobbes, *De Homine*, in *Man and Citizen*, 63. The term 'authorities' is used by Hobbes in *De Homine* as meaning fathers, tutors, and especially books.
33. Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 39.
34. Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics*, 139.
35. 'The Prose Life', in Thomas Hobbes, *Human Nature and De Corpore Politico*, edited by J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 245–53, 250; emphasis added.
36. I have argued that for Hobbes patriarchy is not a product of nature but one of convention in 'Hobbes and the Equality of Women', *Political Studies*, 42 (1994), 441–52.

8 Hobbes and the Philosophical Sources of Liberalism

Hobbes's political thought has often been considered one of the sources of liberalism and Leo Strauss takes his place among famous advocates of this claim. According to him, 'Hobbes was the true founding father in liberalism'¹ because his thought is characterized by two basic assertions: (1) that the fundamental moral fact is the existence of the rights of man, instead of an original duty; and (2) that the office of the state is to preserve natural right in the person of each individual, rather than 'creating or promoting a virtuous existence in humankind'. Moreover, to the extent that a *delightful and comfortable life* is substituted for the 'good life' as the goal of social existence, Hobbes is not only a founder of liberalism but also of modernity as such.

The Straussian strategy of interpretation takes up one of the crucial points of Hobbes's thought; indeed, the obligation of self-preservation appears to be the sole primary *obligation* that is acknowledged by natural liberty when it is fully and boundlessly experienced in the state of nature.² If there is something like a primary duty it is only towards oneself, to promote one's self-interest, and this duty is immediately translated into a right: 'the RIGHT OF NATURE . . . is the liberty each man hath to use his own power, as he will himself, for the preservation of his own nature, that is to say, of his own life'.³ But exercising this right in the state of nature is done at the expense of prejudicing the self-interest of others. This

Special thanks to Emile Perreau-Saussine and Miguel Vatter who helped me with the subtle English formulations, also for the discussion of this text initiated by Miguel Vatter.

because the right to self-preservation entails a right to all available means of preservation, or a right to everything (*jus in omnia*), including another man's body: 'in such a condition everyman has a right to everything, even to one another's body'.⁴ The right of self-preservation is promoted by *distrust*,⁵ which incites us to outwit and dominate others before they can dominate us: 'such augmentation of dominion over men being necessary to a man's conservation, it ought to be allowed him'.⁶

Strauss's thesis generates a well-known paradox. If Hobbes seems to be a liberal – as judged by the primacy of the right to security – he seems at the same time to be a philosopher of political absolutism who refuses all the fundamental elements of political liberty. Both liberal and antiliberal, Hobbes produced in *Leviathan* a baffling mixture. So Habermas writes that if Hobbes appears to be 'the true founding father of liberalism', nevertheless in his system 'the liberal content of natural right is sacrificed to the state in the absolutist form'.⁷ The question is whether liberalism allows such tension between the right to security and the right to civil and political freedom. Strauss seems to think that the right to be free, with all its implications – freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the right to free association, the right to vote and so on – does not belong to the essence of liberalism. Yet Locke demonstrates quite the contrary through his theory of *consent* and of political representation – along with various other elements such as the relation between natural law, 'property' and the freedom to appoint and to dismiss the representatives, including the executive power itself.

Discussion of the provenance of liberalism, and whether it can be attributed to Hobbes, requires one to take a philosophical stand on the nature of liberalism. First, I will argue that Hobbes's conception does not come close to liberalism if we consider the relation between society and the state in *Leviathan*, where individuals have rights only by virtue of the silence of the law. Moreover, the 'author' who takes part in the co-institution of a political 'actor' – through the founding covenant – accepts in advance all the acts and judgements that his 'representative' will perform. But liberal thought, on the contrary, is founded on the distance between citizen and government, by which I mean that liberalism is founded on *the right of judging*, and consequently of criticising, which the citizen maintains throughout the exercise of governmental sovereignty. More fundamentally,

liberalism, according to Montesquieu, Locke, and Kant,⁸ is a philosophy of *obligation* to the law, and not only a theory of the *legitimacy* of the law as the sole ground for obedience. In Hobbes, as long as a law is legitimate – which depends on the relation between the law and the sovereign, hence on the original contract – it must be obeyed; even if, in practice, the law requires fear of punishment for compliance.

Second, I will consider what Hobbes says about the right of resistance. This right remains a *virtual* possibility in civil society. The state does not confiscate or annihilate the natural liberty which gives to an individual or a group of individuals the right to judge whether a law (or command) corresponds to the purposes for which sovereignty was instituted. By placing a centre of resistance and a reservoir of natural right at the core of society, from which the right to resist could be drawn, Hobbes can be said to have inspired liberalism. At issue is not only the right of resistance, but also the capacity of the individual to judge whether his or her rights are being respected. Neither this kind of influence of Hobbes on liberalism – nor his proximity to liberalism – has been acknowledged until recently. I will try to explain why, but also to analyse the strategy of authors such as Leo Strauss, who present to Hobbes the poison pill of being a ‘father of liberalism’. Both the silence of liberals with respect to Hobbes, as well as the discourse on Hobbes by antiliberals, are worthy of interest.

I. CIVIL SOCIETY DEPENDS ON THE STATE

It is constitutive of liberalism that it distinguishes not only between civil society and the state,⁹ but also between the rights (*droits* in French) of society and the law (*droit* also) of the state. So, being a creation of the legislator, *le droit de l'état* can be considered *representative* of the social will,¹⁰ but liberalism does not assume this representation to be necessarily accurate (true) or right (just and fair). The law may be unjust, and therefore may need to be contested and revised. Moreover, society and its members possess rights that are prior to the institution of government. These rights are not granted by *droit de l'état* and they stand before positive laws. In Locke these rights derive from natural law and consist in the individual's ‘property’, specifically, rights to the preservation of life, liberty and personal wealth. Lastly, given the divine provenance of natural law,

these rights involve a duty that God imposes on man: the duty of self-preservation and the duty, insofar as possible, 'to preserve the rest of Mankind'.¹¹ In Lockean liberalism the durability of natural law in civil society, combined with the preexistence of the individual person as *proprietor*, means that natural law has precedence over civil laws and over the rights of individuals, even in their most particularised aspects.¹² One can speak of 'liberalism' in Locke in the sense that the entire civil and political process of contract – majority rule, trust and consent – starts and ends with liberty. The welfare of the individual is thus both the reason for which the state was created as well as the intended beneficiary of its laws. Hence there is the pluralism one finds in Locke's philosophy, which strikes a quintessentially modern tone. In answer to the famous question, *Quis judicabit?*, Locke replies: 'Of that I my self can only be Judge in my own Conscience, as I will answer it at the great Day, to the Supream Judge of all Men'.¹³

The state neither founds society (which is the work of individuals) nor does it grant rights to individuals. But, at the same time, in Locke's vision liberty is only real by virtue of law; for man is 'the only being capable of a law',¹⁴ and 'where there is no Law, there is no Freedom'.¹⁵ It is only through divinely ordained natural law that man is endowed with natural rights, and man enjoys civil rights as a result of the more or less harmonious coexistence of natural law and civil laws. This idea of liberty under the law is also a liberal tenet, for positive law, when made under specific conditions (such as the separation of powers), is a creation of reason, and it addresses the reasonable part of the individual. But when the law becomes unjust, reason must register this state of affairs and oppose it. In Locke the spectrum of noncooperation extends from conditional consent, to 'appeal to heaven' in the form of resistance and insurrection, which even an isolated individual like Jephta may raise at his or her own risk and peril.¹⁶

Hobbes could never accept such a conception, first of all because political freedom cannot be either the source or the *telos* of the state. The empowerment of Leviathan comes about by virtue of the social contract made in conditions where everyone is at risk of violent death. The possibility of leaving the state of nature, Hobbes maintains,¹⁷ lies both in reason (the power of reckoning inspired by natural laws) and in the passions (fear of death and the desire for

security). It is not of their own free will that men gave up part of their natural liberty, but under pressure of necessity. Moreover, once instituted the state aims at security for everyone, but not at political freedom, for freedom and security are in conflict according to Hobbes. So Lucca, the Italian city-state, may have *libertas* written 'on the turrets', but nobody, that is to say no particular man in that city, is freer in Lucca than in Constantinople.¹⁸ The liberty of the whole republic as a body – which is nothing other than its independence from other cities – is not compatible with the political liberty of *subjects*, which would amount to a state of anarchy, in his view. It is true that mankind once experienced 'a full and absolute liberty' for the profit of every particular man,¹⁹ but it did so in a situation *sine lege, sine imperio*, as Hobbes noted in the Latin edition of *Leviathan*.²⁰

In fact liberty for Hobbes means just the opposite of law. Natural liberty 'only is properly called *liberty*',²¹ meaning the capacity of doing something in the absence of impediments, in the same manner as water flows 'freely' when it is not stopped by 'banks or vessels'.²² From this point of view liberty is natural right itself, which is nothing but 'the liberty each man hath to use his own power, as he will himself, for the preservation of his own nature'.²³ Liberty, by contrast with law which 'determineth and bindeth', consists in the freedom of doing or not doing. But natural liberty also means necessity. The freedom of men in pursuit of whatever they want, at the same time realises 'the *necessity* of doing that which God wills, and no more nor less'.²⁴ Man in the state of nature is not free to be free, rather he obeys an internal and external determinism, aided by his reason. Natural necessity, divine will and theological predestination amount to the same thing. The liberty of individuals in society is correspondingly specifically delimited; it consists in enjoying all the things about which the sovereign and his civil laws keep silent, 'such as is the liberty to buy, and sell, and otherwise contract with one another; to choose their own abode, their diete, their own trade of life, and institute their children as they themselves think fit; and the like'.²⁵ Liberty begins where the civil law leaves off, that is to say, natural liberty prevails wherever the sovereign, as a free gift, chooses not to make pronouncements. So civil rights exist in Hobbes's doctrine, but they do not predate the erection of a sovereign, representing rather the limitations the state imposes on itself. In fact, the very process

of state-formation by means of contract, whereby a representative, hence a sovereign,²⁶ is instituted, means that civil society as such and all forms of social relations including domestic life, commercial activity, even the 'people' itself, are state-created. This is because for Hobbes it is only the erection of a sovereign representative that can transform a 'disunited multitude' into a 'people',²⁷ while civil society enjoys its rights to peace and prosperity, made possible by the public Protector.²⁸

2. THE REPRESENTATIVE AS THE IDENTIFICATION MAKER

The second main reason for the discrepancy between Hobbes and the premises of liberalism is his constant refusal in *Leviathan* to confer on the citizen any right that would create distance between the subject and the sovereign. Strictly separated from the internal court of conscience (*in foro interno*) where creeds and thoughts are free,²⁹ man in his outward 'character' (*in foro externo*), his civic mask so to speak, identifies completely with the judgements and attitudes of the representative, whether king or assembly. In chapter xxi, at the very point at which Hobbes is discussing 'Of the liberty of subjects', he claims that 'every subject is author of every act the sovereign doth',³⁰ so that a sovereign *cannot* act unjustly with respect to its subjects, even when it issues a death sentence against an innocent subject, as in the case of David against Uriah – 'yet it was not an injury to *Uriah*, but to *God*'.³¹ As a subject, Uriah is considered to have authorised David with unlimited power, so that Uriah had no competence to judge the violation of equity that, contrary to natural law, and thus against God, David commits. In this case, the most he can do is to flee far away. Of course as long as the sovereign consents, a subject can complain to the court, given that judges are named by the sovereign and are thus his representatives; and it is necessary that the sovereign recognize as valid the positive law invoked by the claimant.³² But these provisions do not alter the fact that in principle no law can be considered unjust, for the very reason that every subject is considered to be the 'author' of the laws that the sovereign promulgates, and therefore 'to do injury to one's self is impossible'.³³

One can see that the formal legitimacy of law (attested by its source) decides any controversy concerning its legal content. The

subject him- or herself is guarantor of this legitimacy, given that the sovereign is supposed to be his or her representative, as well as that of everyone else, in virtue of 'the artificial person of the multitude' that he embodies.³⁴ Hobbes summarises this argument in the chapter devoted to 'The Office of the Sovereign Representative'. He asks: 'But what is a good law? By a good law I mean not a just law, for no law can be unjust. The law is made by the sovereign power, and all that is done by such law is *warranted* and *owned* by every one of the people'.³⁵ The crucial word is 'owned', a term to which Hobbes intentionally assigned various meanings.³⁶ *To own* in this text is not merely a duplication of the authorisation conferring an unlimited power from the 'author' to the 'actor' of the Commonwealth. The notion of 'owning' aims at strengthening this authorisation, a convention that would otherwise remain flimsy, because men generally forget their promises and are inclined to follow their momentary passions.

In *Leviathan*, 'to own' means to be in possession of, to acknowledge something or to recognise oneself as. Why the concept of possession? As author, the individual remains responsible for the sovereign's actions, in the same way that the owner is responsible for the use that the house-holder makes of his estates.³⁷ Here we refer to a passage – concise to the point of obscurity – in chapter xvi, 'Of Persons, authors and things personated', where Hobbes writes: 'Of persons artificial, some have their words and actions *owned* by those whom they represent. . . . For that which in speaking of goods and possessions is called an *owner* (and in Latin *dominus*, in Greek *kurios*), speaking of actions is called author'.³⁸ One of the consequences of the transition from state of nature to civil society is that the citizen, in transferring certain rights, receives in return ownership, so to speak, over the sovereign's acts that represent him. But he cannot recover his estate – except through rebellion – because the right to its use on the part of the sovereign is perpetual, without any defined limit. In this first sense, 'to own' means a tight bond, which is both unidirectional and indissoluble.

The second meaning of ownership moves from the idea of being bound to that of full identification. For, as indicated in various passages of *Leviathan*, the individual must at the same time *own* the sovereign, as being his sole and legitimate government, and *own* to being represented or 'incarnated' in his sovereign. So representation

is also a mirror in which the sovereign plays the role of the people, like an actor who on the stage plays an *autobiographical* role *vis à vis* the writer of the text, who is properly speaking the 'author'.³⁹

Lastly, from a political point of view but also within the metaphorical register of power, to represent is to incorporate: so the 'multitude' becomes a people unified by incorporation in the sovereign – as illustrated by the famous frontispiece to the first edition of 1651. These three modes of understanding (a metaphorical logic, a theory of authorisation, and a theory of the actor) serve to establish the fusion between the political body and its governing agency. One could hardly find a stronger rejection of the liberal principle of the separation between the political people and power. As Montesquieu noted, 'It is a very wrong principle we find in Hobbes: in as much as the people have conferred authorisation on the prince, the actions the prince makes are the people's action and, logically, the people cannot complain against the people'.⁴⁰ But, as a matter of fact, the philosophy of liberalism is not a theory of political legitimacy based on a contract between individuals as the criterion for judging policy. If legitimacy does matter in the modern world, it is still not sufficient to establish political power without the additional criterion of *obligation* under the law, which is also required by liberal philosophy. But such obligation is itself conditional, as explained in different ways by Immanuel Kant and Benjamin Constant.

In the second part of *Theory and Practice*, Kant raises an objection to Hobbes's thesis that it is impossible for the sovereign to be unjust towards its citizens.⁴¹ According to Kant, 'a citizen must have, with the approval of the ruler himself, the authorization to make known publicly his opinions'.⁴² Why? Because as a human being, the citizen 'still has his inalienable rights, which he can never give up even if he wanted to and about which he is authorized to judge for himself'.⁴³ This right to judge concerning one's rights means for Kant an autonomous capacity for self-ownership that prevents society from identifying with the sovereign, making room for independent ways of thinking and judging.⁴⁴ Obedience, says Kant, must be supported by a 'spirit of freedom' such that everybody is able to check for himself that 'this coercion is in conformity with right'.⁴⁵ The liberal spirit is such that to govern men through their freedom is to take it for granted that the government never perfectly 'represents' their wills. For Kant, the Hobbesian conception is condemned

to generate what it would like to avoid: namely obedience without the spirit of freedom, which 'is the occasioning cause of all *secret societies*'.⁴⁶

Benjamin Constant writes along similar lines, maintaining that no law, even if its source is legitimate, can be obeyed without some understanding of its contents, for one has to check that lawmakers do not exceed their competence and do not violate established rights and liberties. According to Constant, lawmakers do not always make real law: 'Any law which commands the practice of delation, of denunciation, is not a law'.⁴⁷ Liberalism maintains that only rational and reasonable law has the power of creating obligations, whereas the legislative power can issue commands that may be legitimate but neither rational nor reasonable. Therefore, it is up to the individual for whom a delegated right to *judge* cannot be substituted; a position typical of the liberal ethic. That is why Locke put this right at the centre of his political philosophy, both in his theory of 'consent' and 'appeal to heaven' and with his concept of toleration. When, in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke develops his notion of the law of opinion, he takes care to remind us of the connection between this law and the political realm (discussed in the *Second Treatise*): 'For though men uniting into politic societies have resigned up to the public the disposing of all their forces . . . yet they retain still the power of thinking well or ill, approving or disapproving of the actions of those whom they live amongst'.⁴⁸ This power of approving or disapproving also applies to government and civil laws.

In sum, Hobbes's position on the relation between society and state is at odds with those adopted by Montesquieu, Kant, Locke and Constant, confirming that security viewed as the principal end of the state is not properly a liberal thesis. This emphasis on security characterizes the modern state, and it is the necessary but not the sufficient condition for philosophical liberalism, but one finds security preserved by skilful states that have no liberal features. Historically, in the view for instance of Fenelon, Bayle and Locke, liberalism did not arise from the right to security, but first from the right to judge, particularly from what Bayle called the 'rights of erring conscience' in theology;⁴⁹ and second from the requirement that political power submit to the rule of law.⁵⁰ With regard to these points, Hobbes appears to be more a representative *ante litteram* of antiliberal positions than a father of liberalism.

3. THE COMPLEXITY OF HOBBS'S THOUGHT: A VEILED SENSE OF THE RIGHT OF RESISTANCE

But to read *Leviathan* only from this point of view would be one-sided. If we also take into consideration chapters xxvi ('Of Civil laws') and xxi ('Of the liberty of the subjects'), we find, contrary to common opinion, that Hobbes has strengthened the citizen's judgement as much as he has reinforced the state. For, although he takes care to highlight the latter, the former always remains valid, if relegated to the background. Working on the principle that 'All laws need interpretation',⁵¹ Hobbes argues that to give an interpretation, is to find out what the lawmaker aimed at, or the final ends or purposes of the law. Qualified interpreters do exist. In the case of natural law, they are the judges appointed by the sovereign, and in the case of positive law, the lawmaker himself. In principle (*de jure*), everyone can rightly interpret the unwritten law of nature: 'Though it be easy [for men] to such as without partiality and passions make use of their natural reason', yet, considering the real world (or *de facto*), 'it is now become of all laws the most obscure'.⁵² Qualified interpreters are needed, namely, judges who are able to resist self-interest and the passions. But among the good qualities of a judge there is 'the goodness of a man's own natural reason and meditation',⁵³ and here Hobbes implies that anyone, by virtue of his natural reason, can be a judge of his own rights. Indeed this chapter ends by describing a situation where the individual is sole judge because the law turns out to be ineffectual or there are unforeseen circumstances. The Latin edition contains a stronger formulation: 'this right [to use one's means as we judge best] has been suppressed by civil law, except in situations where it is not possible to wait for legal protection because in doing so we are taking a risk'.⁵⁴ But this raises a further question: if it is up to the ordinary citizen to judge whether the situation is such that 'it is not possible to wait', does the citizen not have the obligation to check whether the normal situation (i.e., where law can afford protection) does not in fact obtain? Given that the citizen is normally a purely 'passive' subject who never judges, how could he ever be the judge of the exceptional situation? And if this is not the case, then for Hobbes the law in fact requires *consent* – contrary to what has been frequently asserted – even if Hobbes avoids the term 'consent', as being too favourable to anarchy!

Turning now to the right of resistance presented in the chapter 'Of the liberty of subjects', there one finds also that obligation to the law is not absolute, but in this case conditional on the nature of the ends or purposes of a given law or a command. The end must be in conformity with the reasons for which we gave our original submission to the law; in other words, it must conform to the purpose of the contract of representation, which was the institution of sovereignty. 'When, therefore, our refusal to obey frustrates the end for which the sovereignty was ordained, then there is no liberty to refuse; otherwise there is'⁵⁵ – or as the Latin version has it, 'we may use our natural liberty'.⁵⁶ Natural liberty cannot be suppressed by positive law, but only limited by it;⁵⁷ natural liberty continues to exist in civil society as a motivational principle – it fires the individual's endeavour (or *conatus*). It also sustains the judgements that the individual makes by comparing governmental commands with the ends for which sovereignty was instituted – these ends being a previous or a supposed intention. From this perspective, too, the individual must be the judge of the normal case if he is to be a judge of the exception. When natural liberty appears in this way at the foreground, so to speak, it does not spring from nowhere at the breakdown of the contract and of public order; it was always already present, at work both in the private sphere and in the sphere of rights, as the silence of the law allowed.⁵⁸

If liberty 'in the proper sense' is nothing but natural liberty – to adopt Quentin Skinner's interpretation of Hobbes's position⁵⁹ – and if 'full and absolute' liberty flourished *sine lege, sine imperio* (but with the risk of immediate death) in the state of nature – then in civil society, organised by the sovereign's laws, natural liberty cannot simply vanish. For, *qua* human being, the individual enjoys a private life and has the rights belonging to man and citizen; and he also makes sure that public laws correspond to the proper goals of the institutional state. The so-called despotism of Hobbes – heralded by his scandalous claim that individuals are no freer in Lucca than in Constantinople – does not in fact destroy or put to sleep the desire for self-preservation, that is, the natural right in terms of which this desire qualifies in the register of rights.

The sovereign who wanted to take away the natural right of man (for example, by making someone promise to kill, or wound or mutilate himself)⁶⁰ would quickly realize his foolhardiness. For the

individual must be the judge of those cases where he obeys and of those cases where he refuses to obey – either directly or by preparing the way for a refusal. In this way a reservoir of rights lies at the heart of political obligation and of the given system of civil laws, according to Hobbes. Natural liberty is a permanent potentiality that may have socially destructive, but individually valuable, effects. They may even be collectively valuable, as in the case where it is advantageous to join a revolt started by others: ‘But in case a great many men together have already resisted the sovereign power unjustly . . . whether have they not the liberty to join together, and assist, and defend one another? Certainly they have; for they but defend their lives, which the guilty man may as well do as the innocent’.⁶¹

In this sense Hobbes may be seen as a proto-liberal, due to the capacity to judge that he allows the individual, even within the latter’s bond of submission. By insisting that the sovereign, his subjects, the ‘people’, and the conditions of civil society are all ‘artificial’, or the work of artifice, Hobbes at the same time recognizes the durability and force of natural right that persists throughout. It is not the priority given to security that makes Hobbes a possible candidate for liberalism but rather natural liberty, its complementary and veiled face. Natural liberty is the space granted to the human being as the natural *person* exceeding the role of *citizen*; it is also the reservoir of natural rights that may surpass positive right and substitute for it.

Such a reading of the complex logics at work in *Leviathan* underscores the tension that is present at the heart of the state – just as in the case of Locke, but for other reasons – and that Hobbes considered as insurmountable. The semantic play on *to own*, meaning to possess, to avow, to recognize, and to recognize oneself as – only confirms the fragile duality of the relation between power, obedience, and judgement. Hobbes refers to this duality in the very same chapter xxi dedicated to the liberty of subjects: ‘we are to consider . . . what liberty we deny ourselves by owning all the actions (without exception) of the man or assembly we make our sovereign’.⁶² This ‘recognition’ (*owning*) is not automatic, even though the interpreter who privileges the ‘absolutist’ reading of Hobbes may believe it to be so, or may believe that Hobbes wished it to be.

If, for all these reasons, Hobbes may be considered a father of liberalism, one can also understand why liberals have not admitted to

this lineage. For philosophers, like Locke and Kant, it is Hobbes's theory of authorisation and the absence of freedom of opinion in the public sphere that needed to be stressed, while it was in the interest of 'publicists' like Benjamin Constant to make no concession whatsoever to Hobbes. Constant, writing against Hobbes, does so as to bring him close to Rousseau, on the one hand, and to apologists of Napoleon, on the other. Constant's purposes are polemical, addressing the demarcation between civil society and the state, as much to resuscitate individual rights that predate the law of the state, as to recognize the social plurality that postdates it and needs to be translated by the appropriate political organs. For Constant, Hobbes is 'the most brilliant in making despotism a rational system'.⁶³

By the same token, if Hobbes becomes, in the eyes of his twentieth-century interpreters, the 'father of liberalism', this title is generally bestowed on him by the adversaries of liberalism. Either they want to defend a strong state into which Hobbes is considered to have introduced a fissure – Carl Schmitt's reading – or they want to present liberalism as a struggle between individual egos whose metaphor is the Hobbesian state of nature – or even a society where individual rights are hegemonic, as new article of faith. These last two ideas can be found in Leo Strauss and in his followers.

In the controversy between Schmitt and Strauss, there is agreement over the claim that Hobbes is the father of liberalism, as Strauss pointed out in his 'Notes on Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*', of 1932: 'Whereas Hobbes in an [il]liberal world accomplishes the founding of liberalism, Schmitt in a liberal world undertakes the critique of liberalism'.⁶⁴ It is also characteristic of Schmitt to argue in his *Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, of 1938, that there can be no right of resistance in Hobbes: 'There are no points of departure for a right to resist, irrespective of whether it be an objective or a subjective right. It has no place whatsoever in the space governed by the irresistible and overpowering huge machine of the state'.⁶⁵ Schmitt wants to believe that all right in Hobbes derives from the state so that a right to resist would be self-contradictory. But this amounts to an elision of the entire question of natural right, and not a minor elision at that! For Schmitt makes no mention of an essential feature of *Leviathan*: the nineteen laws of nature set out in chapters xiv and xv of that work. Even more surprisingly, Schmitt reads Hobbes as advocating a theory of 'sovereign dictatorship',⁶⁶

which amounts to ignoring the problematic of contract and authorisation altogether. In the end, what is left of Hobbes in Schmitt's reading?

Given these considerations, why does Schmitt present Hobbes as the source of liberalism at all? Schmitt's point is that, by distinguishing between the official religion of the sovereign and the private judgement of the individual, Hobbes makes way for 'the characteristic individual freedoms embodied in the structure of the liberal constitutional system'.⁶⁷ Starting from this idea, Schmitt confuses his hatred of liberalism with the virulent anti-Semitism that is expressed in this work.⁶⁸ For Schmitt, Hobbes has introduced into the heart of his powerful Leviathan a principle of weakness, in the form of private conscience, that will be exploited by the 'Jewish spirit' and by different pluralist schools such as Laski and others. Schmitt's book turns out to be more a document of resentment and hatred than a work of philosophical research on the links between Hobbes and liberalism.

In conclusion, I would like to remark on a *communis opinio* that has recently made a strong comeback, and that weighs on the question of the relation between Hobbes and the philosophy of liberalism. It is commonly thought that liberalism is a sort of 'quietism' whereby politics are left to the laws of the marketplace; and that it is characterised by a radical economism that will end up destroying the legal, ethical and political orders. According to this view liberalism would be prefigured by the *passivity* of the citizen required by Leviathan, and his/her appropriate self-limitation to private life. But this view amounts to a vulgarised version of the position whereby liberalism exchanges liberty in the private sphere for participation in sovereignty, the latter being reserved to an elite. This choice in favour of the 'liberty of the moderns'⁶⁹ was thought to be prefigured by Hobbes, given that he is a defender of absolutism, both in its democratic and in its monarchical guises.

In reality, Hobbes's thought is far more complex than the legend of his 'relentless despotism' would lead us to suppose. Not all liberals are favourable to the poll-tax, and when they are, not necessarily for ever! One cannot reconstruct the ties between Hobbes and liberalism philosophically without taking seriously the potential for resistance that Hobbes placed at the heart of the infrastructures of the state; namely, the irrepressible dynamic of natural right, both in the individual as well as in the community. Conversely, as a matter

of historical record, liberals have often recognised, and at times also practised, the right of resistance, as for instance in the revolution of 1830 in France, or with Locke in England. Even the very moderate Duc de Broglie praised resistance and armed rebellion in Spain in 1823 against the French interventionist attempt to restore absolutism. The state must be strong within its legitimate domain, but it becomes detestable once it stoops to destroy 'liberty in the proper sense'. This particular aspect of Hobbes's thought is welcomed by liberals such as Constant or Tocqueville, but they could hardly have been expected to render homage to Hobbes for it!

NOTES

1. Leo Strauss, *Droit naturel et histoire* (Paris: Flammarion, 1986), 166.
2. On this primary obligation, see L. Foisneau, *Hobbes et la toute-puissance de Dieu* (Paris: PUF, 2000). Foisneau refers Hobbes's concept of obligation to his first theology (God's commandment) and critiques L. Strauss (see 242, 243).
3. *Lev.*, xiv, 1, 63/79.
4. *Lev.*, xiv, 4, 64/80.
5. 'Competition', 'diffidence', 'glory' are three principal sources of the natural state of war among men (*Lev.*, xiii, 6, 61/76).
6. *Lev.*, xiii, 4, 61/75.
7. Jürgen Habermas, *Théorie et pratique* (Paris: Payot, 1975), vol. 1, 95.
8. One needs to distinguish here political liberalism in philosophy from the economic liberalism of Hume and the Scottish Enlightenment; see my book *La liberté et la loi. Les origines philosophiques du libéralisme* (Paris: Fayard, 2000).
9. The notion of 'civil society' is here to be understood in the sense given to it in the Scottish Enlightenment and picked up by Hegel, rather than the meaning given to it in Hobbes's time. Perhaps, in order to be clear I should say 'social life' or 'social system', rather than 'civil society'.
10. For Hobbes the legislator has the duty and the function of translating natural laws into positive right: 'The Law of Nature and the Civil Law contain each other' (*Lev.*, xxvi, 8, 138/174, marginal title).
11. *Two Treatises of Government*, Peter Laslett ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), *The Second Treatise*, 6, 271 (references to Locke are to paragraph and page).
12. For this interpretation of Locke, see L. Jaume, *La liberté et la loi*, chs. 3 and 4.
13. Locke, *The Second Treatise*, 21, 282.

14. *Essais sur la loi de nature*, H. Guianet trans. (Caen, Centre de philosophie politique et juridique de l'Université de Caen, 1986), 15.
15. *The Second Treatise*, 57, 306.
16. *The Second Treatise*, 20–1, 281–2. See also 241, 427.
17. *Lev.*, xiii, 13, 63/78.
18. *Lev.*, xxi, 8, 110/140.
19. *Lev.*, xxi, 8, 110/140.
20. *OL*, III, xxi, 162.
21. *Lev.*, xxi, 4, 108/137.
22. *Lev.*, xxi, 1, 107/136.
23. *Lev.*, xiv, 1, 64/79.
24. *Lev.*, xxi, 4, 108/137. I am not following the interpretation of Foisneau here, for whom it is an obligation imposed by God, rather than natural necessity, that dictates man's pursuit of self-preservation. See my discussion in *Revue française de science politique* (51) 1–2, 2001, 306–10.
25. *Lev.*, xxi, 6, 108/138.
26. Sovereignty results from representation, and not the opposite. See my analysis in L. Jaume, *Hobbes et l'Etat représentatif moderne* (Paris: PUF, 1986).
27. *Lev.*, xviii, 3, 88/111.
28. This is not so far from Bossuet's vision (who was a great reader of Hobbes), which was the opposite of liberalism. See my study: 'Bossuet, Nicole et Domat: société et souveraineté', *Bossuet à Metz*, A.-E. Spica ed. (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005).
29. Hence the formulation cited by Koselleck in *Le règne de la critique* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1979), 62: 'private is in secret free' (*Lev.*, xxi, 12, 239).
30. *Lev.*, xxi, 7, 108/138.
31. *Lev.*, xxi, 7, 109/139.
32. *Lev.*, xxv, 6–7, 137/174. This is a far cry from the liberal guarantees of rule of law of Kant's *Rechtstaat*, for instance.
33. *Lev.*, xviii, 6, 90/112–13.
34. *Lev.*, xvi, xvii.
35. *Lev.*, xxx, 20, 181/229, my italics.
36. See my study 'Le vocabulaire de la représentation de Hobbes à Kant', *Hobbes et son vocabulaire*, Y. C. Zarka ed. (Paris: Vrin, 1992).
37. See Y. C. Zarka, *La décision métaphysique de Hobbes* (Paris: Vrin, 1987), 342.
38. *Lev.*, xvi, 4, 81/101.
39. See L. Jaume, 'La théorie de la personne fictive dans le *Léviathan* de Hobbes', *Revue française de science politique* 33 (6), 1983, 1009–35.

40. Montesquieu, 'Mes pensées', in *Œuvres complètes*, D. Oster ed. (Paris: Le Seuil, 1964), 938.
41. 'Against Hobbes' is a chapter title in *Of Theory and practice*. See Immanuel Kant, 'On the common saying: that may be correct in theory, but it is of no use in practice', *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant, Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
42. Kant, *Of Theory and practice*, 303.
43. Kant, *Of Theory and practice*, 302.
44. The formula 'the right to judge of one's right', that one also finds in Locke, is to my mind the discriminating principle between the families of French liberalism. See L. Jaume, *L'individu effacé ou le paradoxe du libéralisme français* (Paris: Fayard, 1997).
45. Kant, *Of Theory and practice*, 303.
46. Kant, *Of Theory and practice*, 303.
47. Benjamin Constant, 'De l'obéissance à la loi', *Recueil d'articles*, E. Harpaz ed. (Geneva: Droz, 1972), vol. 1, 323. See my commentary: 'Droit, Etat et obligation selon Benjamin Constant', *Commentaire*, 87, 1999, 711–15.
48. Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, II, XXVIII, 10 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997), 318.
49. In French, 'droits de la conscience errante'.
50. On this point, and just as in the case of Robert Filmer in *Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings*, Hobbes considers the idea to be absurd: only the sovereign is sovereign and not the law, which is the instrument of his voice and his will.
51. *Lev.*, xxvi, 21, 142/180 (marginal title).
52. *Lev.*, xxvi, 21, 142/180 (marginal title).
53. *Lev.*, xxvi, 28, 146/184.
54. 'Per naturam enim unicuique *jus* erat viribus et facultatibus suis, sui ipsius arbitrio utendi; id quod lex civilis, nisi quibus legis civilis protectionem tutum non erat expectare, sustulit' (*Lev.*, xxvi, 209).
55. *Lev.*, xxi, 15, 111/142.
56. *Libertate sua naturale uti potest* (*Lev.*, xxi, 166).
57. Hobbes claims that for the subject conferring the authorisation on the sovereign, 'there is no restriction at all of his own former natural liberty' (*Lev.*, xxi, 14, 111/142). But this provocative claim is explicitly contradicted many times; for example see *Lev.*, xxvi, 8, 138/175 and *Lev.*, xxvi, 43, 150/189.
58. See my analysis and the tabular representation given in *Hobbes et l'Etat représentatif moderne*, 146.

59. On 'liberty in the proper sense' see Quentin Skinner, 'Hobbes's Antiliberal Theory of Liberty' in *Liberalism without Illusions*, B. Yack ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 149–69.
60. *Lev.*, xxi, 12, 111/142.
61. *Lev.*, xxi, 17, 112/143.
62. *Lev.*, xxi, 10, 111/141. In Latin this formulation cannot be rendered (as I explained elsewhere), and Hobbes sticks to the concept of *autor*.
63. Benjamin Constant, *Principes de politique, ibid, Oeuvres*, A. Roulin ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), 1107. Constant discusses Hobbes from another perspective and in more detail in the posthumous manuscript also entitled *Principes de politique*, E. Hofmann ed. (Geneva: Droz, 1980), vol. 2, 39–42: 'De Hobbes' (I, 7) and 'Opinion de Hobbes reproduite' (I, 8).
64. Reprinted in Heinrich Meier, *Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss. The Hidden Dialogue* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 102. On what is at stake between Strauss and Schmitt in the interpretation of Hobbes, see the detailed investigation of Miguel Vatter, 'Strauss and Schmitt as Readers of Hobbes and Spinoza: On the Relation between Political Theology and Liberalism', *CR: The New Centennial Review*, 4 (3), winter 2004, 161–214.
65. C. Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (1938), George Schwab and Erna Hilfstein trans. (London: Greenwood Press, 1996), 46.
66. For instance in C. Schmitt, *Les trois types de pensée juridique* (Paris: PUF, 1995), 84.
67. Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, 56.
68. See my critique of Schmitt's reading of Hobbes: 'Carl Schmitt, interprète de Hobbes: une lecture frelatée', *Revue française de science politique*, 53 (4), 2003, 626–9 and my article on the concept of the political and on the notion of sovereignty in Schmitt: 'Carl Schmitt, la politique de l'inimitié', *Historia constitucional*, 5, 2004 (<http://hc.rediris.es>). Also published in *History of Political Thought*, XXV (3), 2004, 536–49.
69. Contrary to the formula that is constantly repeated, Benjamin Constant himself declares at the end of his famous conference ('On the liberty of the ancients compared to that of the moderns') that one must 'combine' both liberties and not sacrifice ancient liberty to the liberty of the moderns. I have pointed out elsewhere the partial readings of this essay by most interpreters – and they are not innocent!

9 Hobbes on the Right to Punish

It is somewhat surprising that Hobbes's theory of the right to punish – in contrast to his theory of the state of nature and his concept of sovereignty – has been so ignored, especially given how important his doctrine of punishment was for all further discussion of this question in early modern theories of natural law.¹ In what follows I will show that Hobbes's doctrine of punishment – having reached its conceptual and theoretical zenith in *Leviathan* – contains some conclusions that are also important elements of modern *Rechtsstaat*; and that to some extent Hobbes can even be seen as the philosophical founder of this concept. In the first part of the article, I will consider some aspects of Hobbes's concept of the limits of legal coercion. In the second part, I will analyze his theory of the right to punish (*jus puniendi*); and finally I will discuss Pufendorf's critique of this theory.²

I. THE LIMITS OF LEGAL COERCION

Hobbes's doctrine of punishment has had a great impact on the subsequent development of criminal law in the natural law tradition. Hobbes himself made an important contribution to replacing the theological foundation of law and the state with a completely secular theory. In the same way modern natural law theorists attempted to found the power to punish on secular reason, without regress to theological arguments. Hobbes's systematic distinction between divine and earthly justice has been fundamental for the secularization of penal law in particular.³ As a result of this distinction he limits punishable offences to so-called outward acts, while all internal acts (i.e., mere opinions or beliefs), as long as they are not accompanied

by outward manifestations and remain merely intentional states of mind, are in principle not punishable. Hobbes's position that governmental power or control is confined to the legal limitation of outward acts is a necessary consequence of his view that whatever religious, ideological or any other beliefs one may have belong merely to the private, inward sphere and cannot be made the object of coercive legal force.

For Hobbes a person can neither arbitrarily control his beliefs and opinions nor submit to coercive force applied to his conscience by another person or legal body. The reason for this is that a person can justify a belief or opinion, that is to say a conviction that truly has any meaning or importance for him, only to himself before the tribunal of his own reason. A conviction that one has – in contrast to an outward act – is not something that one can in principle adopt under the influence of coercion from without, since it is already contained in the concept of conviction or belief that it is based on reasons that anyone, solely on the basis of his or her own reason, can judge as being decisive for adopting this conviction or belief. It is unreasonable, particularly with respect to religious convictions, as well as completely irrational, 'to require of a man endued with reason of his own, to follow the reason of any other man, or of the most voices of many other men'.⁴

It being impossible for men to be coerced from without to adopt certain convictions, this very impossibility is then the reason for Hobbes's separation of the internal (i.e., private and inward) sphere from the external (i.e., outward) sphere, as well as for the legal impossibility of any form of coercion with respect to conscience and conviction.⁵ The limit of legally possible coercion is reached where free action and individual discretion end, and since merely holding convictions or having beliefs is not at the arbitrary discretion of the individual to adopt or give up under external influence, they cannot in principle be subject to legislation backed up by the threat of punishment. State law that provides norms for the regulation of free commerce and action among the citizens is the 'rule of actions only'⁶ and cannot apply to basic convictions and beliefs. So, for instance, the juridical reason for Hobbes's rejection of the Inquisition (or any similar attempt by the state to coerce someone to adopt certain beliefs or convictions) is, contained in the restriction of legislative authority to the legal and lawful regulation of all

possible external free commerce and action. With the case of Galileo Galilei still fresh in his mind, Hobbes opposes all attempts 'to extend the power of the law, which is the rule of actions only, to the very thoughts and consciences of men, by examination and inquisition of what they hold, notwithstanding the conformity of their speech and actions'.⁷

The Inquisition, or any similar attempt to extort conformity of belief on the part of the state, leads individuals to an insoluble contradiction, given that they 'are either punished for answering the truth of their thoughts, or constrained to answer an untruth for fear of punishment'. Therefore according to Hobbes, it offends also against natural law to coerce someone 'to accuse himself of opinions, when his actions are not by law forbidden'.⁸ The criterion according to which the behavior of citizens is assessed concerning criminal and penal action does not address opinions or beliefs, but only the legality or illegality of their actions.

The state is not nevertheless indifferent to the private convictions and opinions of its citizens, and Hobbes is no defender of unlimited freedom of opinion. But basic convictions, as long as they are merely private and internal, are not punishable, compared with opinions that are openly expressed and conveyed to others, which are definitely subject to state supervision and control. Thus, although he grants the freedom of conscience, Hobbes does not concede free expression of opinion as a right. Because the opinions of citizens may differ from the will of the sovereign, the state is charged with the constant task of shaping the ideologies of its citizens and the 'well-governing of opinions'.⁹ The pulpit and the lectern, church and university, are for Hobbes the two institutions by means of which the sovereign must provide for the political education of its citizens and develop their political consciousness.

An important corollary of Hobbes's distinction between unpunishable convictions and beliefs and punishable outward acts, in terms of the problem of secularization, is his distinction between sin (*peccatum*) and crime (*crimen*). In making this distinction he appears to break new ground. As Frank Grunert has shown, the scholastics, Thomas Aquinas and Francisco de Vitoria, considered punishment purely from a theological point of view. They were not interested in a specifically legal consideration of the difference between a right or just action and a wrong or unjust action, and hence they

did not make a strict and unambiguous terminological distinction between *crimen* and *peccatum*. Serious crimes are termed by them *peccata* even when they are dealt with outside a theological context (i.e., by a civil court).¹⁰ Hugo Grotius did not always clearly distinguish between these two ways of breaking a law either. By contrast, Hobbes in *Leviathan* distinguishes strictly between sin (*peccatum*), which is the genus of 'all manner of deviation from the law',¹¹ and crime (*crimen*), which comprises – following the Roman legal tradition – only such offences 'as may be made appear before a judge; and therefore are not mere intentions'.¹² He concludes that 'every crime is a sin; but not every sin is a crime' for which one can be made to answer before a civil court.¹³ Crime and sin are therefore different types of deviance from some norm: the former is a *deviant action*, whereas the latter is merely a *deviant conviction*, which *per se* is not punishable. In order for an act to have legal consequences, and therefore to be punishable, there must be a positive law clearly outlining the states of affairs that constitute the act along with the punishment.

There are three central consequences in penal law of the distinction between *peccatum* und *crimen*, according to Hobbes, which essentially makes the juridical nature of an action dependent solely on its relationship to a preceding positive law:¹⁴

From this relation of sin to the law, and of crime to the civil law, may be inferred, first, that where law ceaseth, sin ceaseth. But because the Law of Nature is eternal, violation of covenants, ingratitude, arrogance, and all facts contrary to any moral virtue, can never cease to be sin. Secondly, that the civil law ceasing, crime cease; for there being no other law remaining but that of nature, there is no place for accusation, every man being his own judge, and accused only by his own conscience, and cleared by the uprightness of his own intention. When, therefore, his intention is right, his fact is no sin; if otherwise, his fact is sin; but not crime. Thirdly, that when the sovereign power ceaseth, crime also ceaseth; for where there is no such power, there is no protection to be had from the law; and therefore every one may protect himself by his own power; for no man in the institution of sovereign power can be supposed to give away the right of preserving his own body.

The most important point is Hobbes's conclusion that apart from positive law there is no action that *per se* has the character of a crime. That is why the killing of an innocent person at the command of

the sovereign is for Hobbes a sin or a transgression against natural law, but not a crime. On this point Hobbes's theory of punishment differs greatly from theories of natural law that operate with the concept of *perseitas*, that there are certain actions that are *per se* – independent of all positive laws of a particular state – crimes. So Christian Wolff, following the scholastic doctrine of the *moralitas objectiva*, states in his *Jus naturae* that neither the permission of the sovereign nor the obedience owed by a subject to his sovereign is sufficient excuse for actions that contravene natural law. Rather, whoever kills an innocent person at the command of his sovereign is accused of murder 'in foro conscientiae'.¹⁵ By contrast, Hobbes maintains that the juridically relevant classification of an action as just or unjust is solely the concern of the sovereign will operating in its legislative function.¹⁶ Therefore, whoever at the command of his sovereign kills an innocent person, does not commit a crime, precisely because he does not have the authority to judge for himself between a just and an unjust action, a matter that only the sovereign has the power to decide.

There is a difference for Hobbes between the simple breaking of a law (i.e., the transgression of a single positive law) and the 'crimen laesæ maiestatis'.¹⁷ The crime against the sovereign, which consists in the general revocation of obedience on the part of the subject, is for Hobbes the epitome of injustice, for the individual is not just guilty of a simple transgression against one or several of the laws, but he places himself completely outside the positive legal system by breaking the 'pactum generale obedientiae',¹⁸ in principle therefore calling into question the very conditions of civil society. In other words, he offends against the 'fundamental law' upon which civil society or the state is predicated.¹⁹ Such a crime against the state cannot be judged according to positive law, but must be judged and punished according to the law of nature. While an isolated offence against a law can be punished according to the principles of the respective legal system, because the offender – in spite of his isolated offence – still accepts and recognizes this legal system, a crime against the sovereign falls outside the spectrum of any positive legal system, because by this crime the individual manifestly rejects this legal system *tout court*. Those who have committed a crime against the state are therefore to be treated as 'hostile to the state' ('ciuitatis hostes'),²⁰ and punished according to the law of war ('non iure Imperij sed iure belli').²¹

In fact such criminals are not punished in the strict sense, as there is no legally fixed limit to their punishment; but the state rather fights against them as representatives of a will hostile to it; and those guilty must therefore be eliminated or destroyed as enemies of the state.

II. A DEFINITION OF PUNISHMENT

Crucial to Hobbes's theory of punishment is his definition of punishment:²²

A PUNISHMENT, *is an evil inflicted by public authority on him that hath done or omitted that which is judged by the same authority to be a transgression of the law; to the end that the will of men may thereby the better be disposed to obedience.*

As for Grotius, punishment for Hobbes consists in inflicting some type of harm which causes the criminal physical or mental pain and suffering. The idea of punishment as the infliction of harm was the *communis opinio* of theories of punishment in the Enlightenment from Grotius to Kant. However, in contrast to Grotius's definition of punishment as an 'evil consisting in suffering, inflicted because of an evil deed' ('malum passionis quod infligitur ob malum actionis'),²³ Hobbes's reformulation is important. Grotius's definition misses reference to the state as the only entity that has the legitimate authority to punish. This notion was not constitutive for Grotius's concept of punishment because he bases the state's authority to punish on a natural authority to punish, which everyone has in the state of nature. But Hobbes's definition explicitly includes only punishment that can be carried out by the state or ordered by a judge. As a consequence it not only dispenses with Grotius's natural law foundation of the authority to punish; but the entire problem of so-called natural or divine punishment, by which – as Kant said – 'the vice punishes itself',²⁴ is now excluded from the philosophical discussion and foundation of penal law.²⁵

According to Hobbes both the assignment of punishments and their enforcement can only be conceived as acts of a public authority or jurisdiction: 'From the definition of punishment, I infer, . . . that neither private revenges, nor injuries of private men, can properly be styled punishments, because they proceed not from public

authority', he claimed.²⁶ The reason for this is contained in the distinction between *peccatum* and *crimen* already mentioned, and the resulting principle of the legal determination of a punishable offence: 'Where is no civil law, there is no crime'. The concept of a crime underlying Hobbes's doctrine of punishment entails that punishments are strictly reactions by the state to offences against the law. Offences against the law, or crimes, are in the first place 'offences against the commonwealth'²⁷ (i.e., offences against the positive legal order put in place and secured by the state), but not offences against a system of justice independent of all positive laws and not injuries against individual rights.

A second consequence is the establishment of a principle of guilt. A culpable action is necessarily a willful and deliberate transgression of a law,²⁸ and willfulness is thus a condition for legal responsibility and culpability.²⁹ Only to the degree that an action falls under the class of willful and deliberate (i.e., voluntary) actions can it be attributed to an individual as his action; for a person is only responsible for his *actiones voluntariae*. The 'right of governing myself'³⁰ embodies this ability to act, which every person has from nature (i.e., the ability to be the subject of willful and voluntary actions). Justice and legislation in the human sphere are therefore limited to this class of actions. Yet at the same time different degrees of culpability and responsibility must be recognized, so that those who for whatever reasons do not have the ability to act freely, and because of this whose actions cannot be counted as deliberate and willful, cannot be made fully responsible for their actions, even if they have legal capacity through representation, on account of their legal guardians.³¹

[C]hildren, fools, and madmen that have no use of Reason may be personated by guardians or curators, but can be no authors (during that time) of any action done by them, longer than (when they shall recover the use of reason) they shall judge the same reasonable.

Hobbes's interpretation of guilt and punishment is closely connected with his philosophical view of the capacities that each individual has as a subject and a person. A human being can be guilty or culpable only to the extent that his/her action is a result of *his/her* conscious and willful acting. Punishment therefore rests on the principle of the *attribution* of culpable actions, and one must distinguish

between those actions that occur intentionally and deliberately, in complete awareness of possible consequences (e.g., murder) and those that are unintentional (e.g., manslaughter) through culpable negligence. The concept of guilt in modern theories of natural law presupposes the knowledge and intention to commit an illegal act. But Hobbes's theory of punishment concerns not only the establishment of the illegality of an action (it offends against a legal norm), but also the determination of the so-called subjective characteristics of a legal state of affairs. It is therefore the (subjective) right of each person to be punished only for those actions that could have fallen within the sphere of his/her possible foreknowledge and intention. On account of this Hobbes calls for a more differentiated consideration of individual action with respect to degrees of guilt and pleads also for the principle of the proportionality of punishments.³² Punishment, for example, must take into account the difference between petty theft, which only is directed towards an object, and robbery, which always implies an immediate attack upon a person.

Consideration of the different reasons for which one can be exempted from culpability and guilt, once these principles have been established, flows from Hobbes's concept of law as sovereign command. Children, the mentally handicapped and the mentally ill are exempted from legal culpability because they cannot enter into contracts and, on account of this, have not given up their right to all things (*ius in omnia*) within the framework of the social contract. They do not recognize, therefore, the consequences of the authorization and establishment of sovereign power based on this contract. Moreover, they are not in a position to know the laws and to act in conformity with them.³³ Further reasons exempting people from legal culpability are the lack of opportunity to know the laws and any action undertaken for self-defence in the case of acute mortal danger: 'If a man by the terror of present death, be compelled to do a fact against the law, he is totally excused, because no Law can oblige a man to abandon his own preservation'.³⁴ The justification for this is the inalienable right to self-preservation. For faced with the alternative of committing an illegal act to prolong one's life, or dying immediately, nature itself forces a human being to commit the act. The same holds for theft in the case of famine.

The demand that no innocent person be punished also follows from Hobbes's principle of culpability.³⁵ Although this at first

sight seems quite trivial, Hobbes attaches to the principle of guilt, which itself contains the distinction between merely negligent or intentional actions and the consideration of circumstances that can restrict or exempt culpability,³⁶ the simple idea that punishment necessarily presupposes guilt. Illegal acts must therefore be set down and established previously by law. But Hobbes also includes the claim – not at all self-evident in his time – that subjects are equal before the law and the demand for due process. It is because all citizens are equally subject to the same principle that a harm inflicted without ‘precedent public condemnation’ is ‘not to be styled by the name of punishment, but of an hostile act, because the fact for which a man is punished ought first to be judged by public authority to be a transgression of the law’.³⁷

The question of the proportionality of punishment is for Hobbes closely connected with the principle of guilt. As already noted, Hobbes argues that punishment must, for example, take into account the qualitative differences between crimes (e.g., between petty theft directed only towards an object and robbery, which is always connected with the immediate use of force against a person or with the threat of violence against one’s life and person). The same holds for acts committed in the heat of the moment (i.e., crimes ‘arising from a sudden passion’).³⁸ In establishing the principle of the proportionality of punishment, Hobbes explicitly criticizes the Stoic view,³⁹ according to which the universal quality of a wrong or unjust action consists in its offence against the conditions under which all human beings and their rational ends can coexist in harmony. Every action against the laws of nature (*contra legem naturalem*), or which harms another, has, for the Stoics, the character of an offence against the divinely ordained natural order, on account of which the community of all human beings is possible.⁴⁰ According to this premise offences against the idea of a *bonum commune* are indiscriminately to be conceived of as leading to the necessary destruction of the community of all human beings, so there can be no principle of proportionality. Contrary to the Stoics, Hobbes calls for a more differentiated consideration of illegal actions with respect to the gravity and seriousness of the offence. He agrees with the Stoics that every wrong or unjust action as such is the deviation from a norm, but this does not entail that offences are equally unjust or to be punished equally.⁴¹ Rather, Hobbes claims that ‘the degrees of crime are taken on divers scales,

and measured, first, by the malignity of the source, or Cause: Secondly, by the contagion of the Example: Thirdly, by the mischief of the effect; and fourthly, by the concurrence of times, places, and persons'.⁴²

An immediate consequence of the principle of proportionality is Hobbes's plea for a more differentiated system of punishment. Besides establishing the objective facts, certain subjective, extenuating circumstances, as well as the exemption from culpability of the incapacitated, must be taken into account, which can lead to the mitigation or commutation of a sentence:⁴³

From these different sources of crimes, it appears already, that crimes are not (as the Stoics of old time maintained) of the same alloy. There is place, not only for EXCUSE, by which that which seemed a crime, is proved to be none, but also for EXTENUATION, by which the crime that seemed great is made less.

The principle 'nulla poena sine lege' once again follows from the fact that no action is morally bad *per se*: 'No law, made after a fact done can make it a crime'.⁴⁴ The prohibition against a retrospective or *ex post facto* increase in the severity of the punishment, where punishments are set down and fixed by law, follows from the same principle: 'Punishments declared before the Fact, excuse from greater punishments after it'.⁴⁵ Already in *De Cive* Hobbes emphasized that it belongs to 'libertas innoxia', that is to say, the private freedom of the individual citizen insofar as it is not dangerous to the state, that one has to fear no other punishments than those which one can foresee and expect.⁴⁶

With his demand for the rationalization of the penal system according to the principles of right reason (*Vernunftrecht*), Hobbes consciously and firmly distances himself from the traditional ideas of his countrymen based on English Common Law. His opposition to the Anglo-Saxon legal tradition manifests itself in his critique of two characteristics of English Common Law: first that it knows no prohibition against retrospectivity; and second that legal decisions are made on the basis of precedent.⁴⁷ If there were still any doubt that Hobbes is a theoretician who grounds his system on the conditions of reason and rational thought, and is not a legal positivist, his critical analysis of the English legal tradition would provide material enough to dispel it. I can give only one example: Hobbes clearly

opposes the law valid in his own time in England (and its legal advocates like Edward Coke), according to which the flight of an accused person 'for fear of injury' can be seen as a sufficient 'presumption of guilt', leading automatically to conviction, even when the accused has been acquitted by a court of the respective charges.⁴⁸

Positive laws as the general rules through which the actions of citizens can and should be directed and guided should be so designed that individual freedom collides as little as possible with the freedom of others, according to Hobbes. From this consideration he derives the necessity of punishment as a safeguard against transgressions of the law that would harm others.⁴⁹ The reason for setting punishment down and fixing it by law is its deterrence function, as a means of producing law-abiding citizens. The threat of punishment or the infliction of harm are deemed sufficient to influence the will of citizens so that they are motivated to act in conformity with the laws or are deterred from committing punishable offences. Hobbes is in agreement with Roman Law,⁵⁰ and with his contemporary Grotius,⁵¹ in advocating the doctrine of preventive punishment. Declaring that 'the aim of punishment is . . . terror',⁵² Hobbes argued that the function of punishment, as dictated by natural law,⁵³ takes account of the fact that the threat of punishment (i.e., the idea of the detrimental and harmful consequences that result from a crime) creates an external motive for the determination of the will so that the person is deterred from committing the intended punishable offence.

The way that deterrence works, according to Hobbes, is similar to the way that psychological coercion in general works: the mere thought of the threat of punishment makes the action psychologically impossible; that is to say, the mere thought of the disadvantages and inconveniences of the punishment cancels out all the advantages calculated to result from the intended act. Hobbes in fact uses the specific phraseology, 'calculation of convenience and inconvenience' ('*deliberatio . . . commodorum et incommodorum*'), to refer to the effect that the threat of punishment brings about in the mind of the person. Moreover, Feuerbach's theory – developed much later than Hobbes's – that the punishment threatened must therefore be as great as possible for it to have any effect, is already implicit in *De Cive*.⁵⁴ By its nature, punishment serves the purpose of 'correction of the offender, or direction of others'.⁵⁵ For this reason the concept

of punishment as legally sanctioned revenge is staunchly rejected by Hobbes. If the infliction of a harm were merely designed to avenge an offence that occurred in the past, then punishment would be a senseless 'act of hostility',⁵⁶ so that *Lex talionis*, as a legally sanctioned form of revenge or retaliation would be a pointless 'glorying in the hurt of another' and therefore forbidden by natural law as 'cruelty'.⁵⁷

Retrospectivity is ruled out in the civil law tradition in favour of prospectivity. For Hobbes it is a dictate of reason, expressed in the seventh natural law, that punishment must be directed towards the future, that is, to securing everyone's right and liberty.⁵⁸ Although punishment should have a deterrent effect on subjects on account of the threat of inflicting harm, penal laws as such are not immediately derived from the norms contained in them. This notion follows from Hobbes's theory that penal laws in the first place are to be considered directives for the execution of those laws that the sovereign enacts for the prosecution of crimes. In this respect penal laws reflect those norms 'which declare what penalty shall be inflicted on those that violate the law'. Since punishment can only be meted out by state courts, penal regulations are intended for the 'ministers and officers [charged with legal] execution'. This distinguishes 'penal laws' from distributive laws 'that determine the rights of the subjects, declaring to every man what it is by which he acquireth and holdeth a propriety in lands or goods, and a right or liberty of action',⁵⁹ and therefore apply to all subjects.

Hobbes has little to say about the trial process itself. But his statement about torture, which played such an important role in early modern penal and criminal law, is interesting in this context: 'For torture is to be used but as means of conjecture and light in the further examination and search of truth'.⁶⁰ Hobbes does not reject torture in principle (i.e., he had no objections to torture for reasons of justice or humanity). He criticizes torture rather in terms of its shortcomings in providing valid evidence in a legal case. Confessions obtained under torture are for Hobbes worthless and cannot form the basis of an accusation because of human vulnerability to pain as a motive against telling the truth. Moreover, Hobbes emphasizes that the person being tortured, on account of his right of self-preservation, is justified in doing everything possible to protect himself, and any

statement made by him is justified under the circumstances, independent of its truth or falsity. Confessions obtained under torture also contradict natural law, according to which there is no obligation to accuse oneself. The accused has the right to refuse to give evidence and also a right to be heard by the court, '[f]or all Judges, sovereign and subordinate, if they refuse to hear proof, refuse to do justice'.⁶¹

All in all, Hobbes's ideas on penal law and the penal system, as well as his continual demands for rationalization of the practice of punishment and the codification of punishable offences, follow from his conception of a state based on law and order in which the boundaries and limits of the state's power to punish, as well as the rights of subjects, are defined, set down and fixed. That said, one must remember that these demands are for Hobbes only postulates of natural law that the sovereign should fulfill, but do not represent legally recoverable claims that citizens can legally demand from the sovereign power or coerce the sovereign power to fulfill. If the sovereign power condemns an innocent person, it offends against natural law as well as the principle of establishing guilt – both of which forbid such an act. But the subject or citizen himself has not been wronged by such a transgression against the fairness and justice demanded by natural law because the subject is without rights in his/her relationship to the sovereign.⁶² The subject's lack of rights in relation to the sovereign is, however, not so much a product of Hobbes's formulation of natural law as it is a product of the specific nature of the Hobbesian social contract.

III. HOBBS'S FOUNDATION OF THE *IUS PUNIENDI*

In this section Hobbes's theoretical basis for the right to punish will be considered. First of all, by taking into account the Hobbesian concept of the state of nature, the systematic reasons that Hobbes could provide for criticizing natural executive right, that Grotius takes as the basis of punishment, become clearer. In his main work *De iure belli ac pacis*, Grotius also develops the outlines of a natural law foundation for punishment, which was, in fact, probably the source of Locke's 'strange doctrine' of punishment in the *Second Treatise of Government*. Two items are of note in *De iure belli ac pacis*:

first, Grotius separates his own theory of criminal law from that of Vitoria, Vasquez and other representatives of Spanish Scholasticism.⁶³ According to the scholastic concept of natural law, the right to punish (*ius puniendi*) is a consequence of the establishment of political power. Grotius, by contrast, stresses the direct derivation of the right to punish from the natural law: 'Punishment . . . may be executed by anyone at all according to the law of nature'.⁶⁴ Grotius is nevertheless committed to holding that the law of nature does not determine exactly who should execute the punishment. But this restriction does not change his fundamental conviction that wrongdoing degrades man to a lower order of being,⁶⁵ and that within the limits of equity punishment may be executed by all those who are without moral defects.

Hobbes, contrary to this assumption, maintains that in the state of nature, in which everybody is his or her own judge (the principle of *ipse iudex*), and in which everybody has a right to all things (*ius in omnia*), there is no place for punishment. No individual application of force or coercion can be understood as a way of establishing or maintaining a community between men based on reason. Moreover, the claim that everybody is entitled by nature to inflict punishment, so that wrongdoers get what they deserve, would destroy the possibility of justice among men and prove a constant source of perpetuating the 'war, where every man is enemy to every man'.⁶⁶ No one, he concludes, can be secured from injury and violence by possession of a right to punish deemed original or commanded by natural law.

Given that the arguments Hobbes offers against the claim of natural executive right can more easily be derived from natural law on his formulation, it is somewhat trickier to discover his basis for establishing the right to punish. At the beginning of chapter xxviii of *Leviathan*, Hobbes raises a question 'of much importance', namely 'by what door the right or authority of punishing in any case came in?' He then goes on to reject various possible answers to this question. The power of punishment cannot be derived from an act of a renouncing the right of self-defence. As Hobbes says, it is not possible by the terms of the social contract to give up or relinquish the right of self-defence. It is also impossible to base the right to punish on the consent of the wrongdoer. If punishment is to be understood as an act of coercion, directed against the will of the criminal, then it would be unreasonable to suppose that the law of punishment depends on

his agreement. While everybody can commit himself, first, to not resisting the commands of the ruler or sovereign and, second, to assisting him in punishing other citizens, it does not follow from this that everybody has explicitly consented to be penalized, or that he has agreed not to resist in cases where coercion is applied. On the contrary, Hobbes emphasizes that covenants 'not to defend myself from force' and 'the promise of not resisting force,'⁶⁷ are invalid, for no one is able to promise not to secure his preservation. Starting from these assumptions, Hobbes concludes that 'the right which the commonwealth . . . hath to punish is not grounded on any concession or gift of the subjects'.⁶⁸ But the fact that the basis of the power to punish cannot be derived from covenants makes the question of the origin of *ius puniendi* more urgent. Imposing punishment cannot, moreover, be based on an agreement with the wrongdoer: 'For . . . no man is supposed bound by covenant not to resist violence; and consequently, it cannot be intended that he gave any right to another to lay violent hands upon his person'.⁶⁹

So far only negative arguments have been considered: Hobbes's rejection of misleading answers and reasons. But as far as his own positive solution is concerned, one cannot help but notice a tension between the concept of authorization, on the one hand, and Hobbes's conception of the state's right to punish, on the other. By introducing the concept of authorization in *Leviathan*, Hobbes realized that the sovereign's authority, granted by the social contract, is to be understood as a qualitatively new right. Pursuing this line of thought, he would have been logically committed to considering the sovereign's right to punish transgressors of a law as having its origin in the act of authorization as well. Hobbes claims indeed that the person who 'attempt[s] to dispose his sovereign, be killed or punished by him for such attempt, . . . is author of his own punishment, as being by the institution, author of all his sovereign shall do', and may, therefore, 'be punished by his own authority'.⁷⁰ One would expect him to consider the ruler's right to inflict pain upon his subjects also as a new right created by authorization. But Hobbes did not argue in this way.

On what basis, then, does the sovereign acquire the right to punish? In essence, Hobbes established the right to punish on the renunciation of the right to all things (*ius in omnia*), that is to say, the sovereign's power of punishment is derived from the fact that,

after all individuals have renounced their natural liberty, he is the last and only holder of the right to all things:

I have also showed formerly that before the institution of commonwealth, every man had a right to everything, and to do whatsoever he thought necessary to his own preservation, subduing, hurting, or killing any man in order thereunto. And this is the foundation of that right of punishing which is exercised in every commonwealth. For the subjects did not give the sovereign that right, but only (in laying down theirs) strengthened him to use his own as he should think fit, for the preservation of them all; so that it was not given, but left to him, and to him only, and (excepting the limits set him by natural law) as entire as in the condition of mere nature, and of war of everyone against his neighbour.⁷¹

IV. PUFENDORF'S CRITIQUE OF HOBBS ON THE RIGHT TO PUNISH

The weakness of Hobbes's rationale for the right to punish is quite striking and has led to suggestions that Hobbes's theory of punishment is an unfinished draft.⁷² It was the target of criticism by Samuel Pufendorf whose contribution to the question of establishing criminal law will now be considered. It is a notable feature of Pufendorf's approach to Hobbes that he confronts his arguments on sovereignty and authorization with Hobbes's own doctrine of criminal law. This means that Pufendorf⁷³ recognizes that Hobbes's 'foundation of that right of Punishing' in fact contradicts his own theory of the social contract. Hobbes was wrong in claiming that the *ius puniendi* 'was not given but left to the state' by the renunciation of the right to all things because natural right in the state of nature is an unlimited right to self-preservation. The right to all things cannot be understood as a competence to punish because it could not mean having the right to exercise legitimate power over another person. There is thus no way to derive the right to punish on the basis of Hobbes's theory of the sovereign's right to all things. Pufendorf concludes:

To this [Hobbes's theory] the reply can be made that the right to exact punishment differs from that of self-preservation, and that since the former is exercised over subjects, it is impossible to conceive how it already exists in a state of nature, where no one man is subject to another.⁷⁴

Despite these critical remarks about this special feature of Hobbes's effort to establish the right to punish, Pufendorf is strongly influenced by Hobbesian thought. While some recent studies stress the more traditional or Aristotelian elements of his theory,⁷⁵ it must be emphasized that Pufendorf – at least on questions of criminal law – sides with Hobbes's critique of the natural law tradition.⁷⁶ In contrast to Grotius and Locke,⁷⁷ Pufendorf stresses the fact that in the state of nature or in 'natural liberty no place is afforded for human punishment' because any act of coercion here is executed 'by means of war, and not by means of punishment, as it is properly understood'. The reaction to wrongdoing is an act of war in order to gain satisfaction for damage, or even revenge, but not punishment in the strict sense: 'For those who live in natural liberty there is no place for punishment', and the enforcement of one's subjective claims is only by means of war; but evils inflicted by means of war are not . . . punishments in the proper sense of the word'.⁷⁸

Pufendorf's concept of criminal law is also based on a new idea of injury. In terms of the classical natural law doctrine of justice, injury is an act contrary to the conditions of peaceful coexistence among human beings based on the teleological idea that nature itself is an order that is arranged appropriately. In this order, everybody has the right to satisfy his or her natural and reasonable needs in accordance with the same rights as anyone else. Grotius and Locke, therefore, consider wrongdoing to be an offence against this functional order of nature or against the will of God. But, rejecting the idea that nature itself is a rational and functionally arranged order that includes certain general rules to limit our external liberty, and stressing the artificial character of the legal order between men, Hobbes and Pufendorf are committed to changing the meaning of injury (*injuria*).

On the one hand, Pufendorf like Hobbes restricted the meaning of injury, or of the 'actio injusta', to the violation of a perfect right: 'We must notice that the kind of unjust action which is done by deliberate design and which violates what is due to another by perfect right or which he possesses by perfect right (no matter how obtained), is properly called a wrong'.⁷⁹ But Pufendorf does not clarify the relationship between this concept of injury and the question whether an action is punishable because he does not distinguish, as Hobbes does, between crime and sin.⁸⁰ It is evident, however, that, by changing the

meaning of wrongdoing or injury, as they do, Hobbes and Pufendorf relate punishment exclusively to the legal order guaranteed by the sovereign's power. Therefore, a punishment can only be imposed on the criminal according to the terms of civil law.

NOTES

1. For a further discussion, see Cattaneo 1965, 1995; Heyd 1991; Norrie 1984; Zarka 1990. I am grateful to Christopher Forlini for translating this article from German.
2. For a fuller account of Hobbes's theory of punishment, see Hüning 2005.
3. *Lev.*, xxxi, 5, 186–7/235–6: 'The right of nature, whereby God reigneth over men, and punisheth those that break his laws, is to be derived, not from his creating them (as if he required obedience, as of gratitude for his benefits), but from his *irresistible power*. I have formerly shown how the sovereign right ariseth from pact; to show how the same right may arise from nature, requires no more but to show in what case it is never taken away. . . . To those, therefore, whose power is irresistible, the dominion of all men adhereth naturally by their excellence of power; and consequently it is from that power that the kingdom over men, and the right of afflicting men at his pleasure, belongeth naturally to God Almighty; not as Creator and gracious; but as omnipotent. And though punishment be due for sin only (because by that word is understood affliction for sin); yet the right of afflicting is not always derived from men's sin, but from God's power'.
4. *Lev.*, xlvii, 20, 385–7/482.
5. See *Lev.*, xl, 2, 249–51/318: 'As for the inward *thought* and *belief* of men, which human governors can take no notice of (for God only knoweth the heart), they are not voluntary, nor the effect of the laws, but of the unrevealed will, and of the power, of God, and consequently fall not under obligation'. For freedom of conscience, see *Lev.*, xxxvii, 13, 237–8/300. Yet the freedom to openly express opinions must be distinguished from the freedom of conscience because the state reserves the power to control and even forbid the former – in contrast to the freedom of conscience, because expressing opinions openly or in the public sphere is definitely within the human sphere of arbitrary discretion.
6. *Lev.*, xlvi, 37, 378–9/466.
7. *Lev.*, xlvi, 37, 378–9/466.
8. *Lev.*, xlvi, 37, 378–9/466.
9. *Lev.*, xviii, 9, 89–91/113.
10. Grunert 1999, 230.

11. *Lev.*, xxvii, 2, 151–2/191; see *De Cive*, 17: ‘*Peccatum* significatione latissimâ comprehendit omne *factum*, *dictum*, & *volitum* contra rectam rationem’.
12. *Lev.*, xxvii, 2, 151–2/191.
13. *Lev.*, xxvii, 2, 151–2/191.
14. *Lev.*, xxvii, 3, 152/191.
15. Wolff 1968, § 973 notes: ‘Libertatem legislatoris restringit lex naturæ præceptiva ac prohibitiva, cum in præcipiendo & prohibendo, tum in permittendo, nec subditum excusat obedientia superiori debita, nec permissio ab eodem facta, si quid committit, quod legi naturæ adversatur, etiamsi conveniat legi civili. Ita homicidii reus est in foro conscientiae, qui iustu principis innocentem occidit’.
16. Hobbes 1983, xii, 1 (note that I cite *De Cive* from *The Latin Version*, because the English translation, erroneously attributed by Warrender to Hobbes, is unreliable): ‘ante imperia, iustum & iniustum non existere; vt quorum natura ad mandatum sit relatiua; actioque omnis suâ naturâ Adiaphora est. Quod iusta vel iniusta sit, à iure imperantis provenit. Reges igitur legitimi quæ imperant iusta faciunt imperando, quæ vetant vetando iniusta’.
17. *De Cive*, xiv, 20.
18. *De Cive*, xiv, 20.
19. *Lev.*, xxvii, 37, 160/202.
20. *De Cive*, xiv, 22.
21. *De Cive*, xiv, 22; see *De Cive*, vi, 2.
22. *Lev.*, xxviii, 1, 161/203
23. Grotius 1919, ii, 20, § 1. For an account of Grotius’s theory of punishment, see Hüning 2000 and Tießler-Marenda 2002.
24. Kant 1914, § 49 E, 331, ‘das Laster sich selbst bestraft’.
25. Hobbes mentions natural punishments only in passing, cf. *Lev.*, xxxi, 40, 192–3/243; Pufendorf also refuses to treat the problem of natural punishments systematically – see Pufendorf 1998, viii, 3, § 14.
26. *Lev.*, xxviii, 3, 161–3/204.
27. *Lev.*, xxx, 15, 180–1/226.
28. *De Cive*, xiv, 17: ‘quid sit *ratione culpandum* definiendum est à ciuitate; vt *culpa*, hoc est, *PECCATVM* sit, quod quis fecerit, omiserit, dixerit, vel voluerit contra *rationem ciuitatis*, id est contra leges’.
29. ‘[A]ctions which men voluntarily do’ are wilfull and deliberate ‘because they proceed from their will, proceed from *liberty*’. *Lev.*, xxi, 4, 107–8/137.
30. *Lev.*, xvii, 13, 87–8/109.
31. *Lev.*, xvi, 10, 81–2/103.
32. The principle of proportionality is one of the most important reforms in early modern theories of penal law – see

- Thomasius 1963; Montesquieu 1979, VI, 19; Beccaria 1965, §§ vi, xxvii, xlvii.
33. *Lev.*, xxvii, 25, 156–8/198.
 34. *Lev.*, xxvi, 12, 139–41/177: ‘From this, that the law is a command, and a command consisteth in declaration or manifestation of the will of him that commandeth [by voice, writing, or some other sufficient argument of the same], we may understand that the command of the commonwealth is law only to those that have means to take notice of it’.
 35. *Lev.*, xxvi, 24, 142–4/181–2; xxviii, 22, 165–6/208.
 36. See Hobbes 1971, 148: ‘There is indeed great need of good distinction in a Case of killing by misfortune. . . . It must be a voluntary unlawful Act that causeth the death, or else it is no Murder by the Law of Reason’.
 37. *Lev.*, xxviii, 5, 161–3/204.
 38. *Lev.*, xxvii, 33, 158–60/200.
 39. *Lev.*, xxvii, 21, 155–6/197; *Dialogue*, 140; for the Stoic theory of crime or unjust action, see *Diogenes Laertios* vii, 120. – Hobbes’s critique of the Stoic theory was adopted by Pufendorf 1998, viii, 3, § 15; Thomasius 1963, iii, 7, § 117, and Gundling 1744, *Erläuterung über Libri ii. Cap. 13*, § 17, 274ff.
 40. *Cicero*, *De officiis*, i, 21; ii, 21; iii, 28; *De finibus*, iii, 70.
 41. *Lev.*, xxvii, 21, 155–6/197: ‘For though all crimes do equally deserve the name of injustice, as all deviation from a straight line is equally crookedness, which the Stoics rightly observed, yet it does not follow that crimes are equally unjust, no more than that crooked lines are equally crooked, which the Stoics not observing, held it as great a crime, to kill a hen, against the law, as to kill one’s father’. (The example Hobbes refers to was taken from Cicero’s speech *Pro L. Murena*, 61.)
 42. *Lev.*, xxvii, 29, 156–8/199.
 43. *Lev.*, xxvii, 21, 155–6/197.
 44. *Lev.*, xxvii, 9, 152–3/192; see *De Cive*, xiii, 16. On Hobbes’s understanding of the prohibition of retrospectivity or the *ex post facto*, see Cattaneo 1965, 278.
 45. *Lev.*, xxvii, 8, 152–3/192; see *Lev.*, xxviii, 10, 161–3/205: ‘[I]f a punishment be determined and prescribed in the law it selfe, and after the crime committed there be a greater punishment inflicted, the excesse is not punishment, but an act of hostility’.
 46. *De Cive*, xiii, 16.
 47. *Lev.*, xxvi, 24, 142–4/181: ‘Therefore, all the sentences of precedent judges that have ever been, cannot all together make a law contrary to natural equity, nor any examples of former judges can warrant an unreasonable sentence, or discharge the present judge of the trouble of studying what is equity (in the case he is to judge) from the principles of his own natural reason’.

48. See Hampton 1986, 243.
49. *De Cive*, vi, 4: 'Potestatem Coactiuam necessarium esse ad securitatem... Securitati itaque non *pactis*, sed *pœnis* prouidendum est'.
50. *Digest*, xlvi, 19, 20.
51. Grotius 1919, ii, 20, § 4, 1 – with reference to *Plato* (*Protagoras*, 324; *Nomoi*, xi, 934) and *Seneca* (*De ira*, i, 16; ii, 31).
52. *Lev.*, xxviii, 10, 161–3/205, and *De Cive*, xiii, 16: 'Finis enim punitio- nis est, voluntatem hominis non cogere, sed formare, & talem facere, qualem eam esse cupit is qui pœnam statuit'.
53. *Lev.*, xv, 19, 76–8/96: 'A seventh [law of nature] is *that in revenges* (that is, retribution of evil for evil) *men look not at the greatness of the evil past, but the greatness of the good to follow*'. See Hobbes, 1994a, xv, 9; xx, 10; *De Cive*, iii, 11; xiii, 16.
54. *De Cive*, xiii, 16: 'Et deliberatio nihil aliud est nisi commodorum & incommodorum facti quod aggredimur, tanquam in balance ponderatio, vbi quod præponderat necessario secundum inclinationem suam pro- cedit. Siquidem ergo legislator pœnam minorem crimini appendit, quàm vt libidini metus præponderet, libidinis supra metum pœnæ excessus, quo crimen committitur, legislatori attribuendus est, hoc est, summo imperanti; ideoque si punit maiori pœnâ, quàm ipse legibus præfiniuit, punit in alio, quod peccauit ipse'.
55. *Lev.*, xv, 19, 76–8/96.
56. *Lev.*, xxviii, 163–5/206.
57. *Lev.*, xv, 19, 76–8/96.
58. *Lev.*, xv, 19, 76–8/96.
59. *Lev.*, xxvi, 39, 146–8/185–6.
60. *Lev.*, xiv, 30, 69–70/87. In other words Hobbes is sanctioning police confessions extracted by the use of torture.
61. *Lev.*, xxvi, 24, 144–6/182. Therefore, the public announcement of laws is a necessary condition of penal justice: 'The law of nature excepted, it belongeth to the essence of all other lawes to be made known to every man that shall obliged to obey them either by word, or writing, or some other act, known to proceed from the sovereign authority' (*Lev.*, xxxvi, 15, 141–2/178).
62. See *Lev.*, xxi, 7, 108–10/138–9.
63. Grotius 1919, ii, 20, § 40.
64. Grotius 1919, ii, 20, § 7.
65. Grotius 1919, ii, 20, § 3.
66. *Lev.*, xiii, 9, 61–3/76.
67. *Lev.*, xiv, 29, 69–70/87.
68. *Lev.*, xxviii, 2, 161–3/204.
69. *Lev.*, xxviii, 2, 160–1/203.
70. *Lev.*, xviii, 3, 88–9/111.

71. *Lev.*, xxviii, 2, 161–3/204.
72. Nagler 1918, 296, calls Hobbes's concept of punishment a preliminary sketch.
73. On this point, see *Samuel Pufendorf* 1998, viii, 3, § 1ff.
74. Pufendorf 1998, viii, 3, § 1.
75. See especially Behme 1995.
76. The relationship between Pufendorf and Hobbes has been the central theme in Fiammetta Paladini's important study of Paladini 1990.
77. See Hüning 2004.
78. Pufendorf 1998, viii, 3, § 2; see *Hartung* 1996, 125–6.
79. Pufendorf 1991, i, 2, § 15.
80. Fiorillo 1996, 1996a.

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10 Hobbes's Covenant Theology and Its Political Implications

I. INTRODUCTION

The reassessment of Hobbes's theology achieved in the last twenty years has produced three tendencies that now seem well entrenched among scholars. The first is to acknowledge the importance of that part of the philosopher's thinking; second, to admit its indissoluble links with Hobbes's political theory; and third, to recognize its heterogeneous, and in many ways strongly heterodox, nature. Ironically, the recent publication in the German original of Leo Strauss's provocative and illuminating analysis of Hobbes's critique of religion, and its welcome translation into French, appear to be the culmination of this process, although the book was written some seven decades ago.¹ One aspect of Hobbes's religious doctrine has been less frequently addressed, and that is the presence in his writings of various elements of covenant theology. To the extent that it has been treated, this topic has generated several types of commentary that seem to invite discussion.² It is my contention that these commentaries rely on a partial and mistaken understanding of what covenant theology is about, and that they consequently fail to establish its proper relation to Hobbes's theory. After a brief outline of covenant doctrine, I will argue here that, to a great extent, Hobbes's consistent although subversive brand of covenant theology shapes the formal structure of his approach to Christian religion; that it cannot be properly understood unless placed in a political perspective; and that its very singularity helps explain the peculiar character of Hobbesian political theology. The upshot, moreover, is a deflationary picture of Christ, man and prophet, but never a reigning sovereign, and hardly

the Almighty God, which understandably earned Hobbes the charges of heresy levelled against him.

2. COVENANT THEOLOGY

It is not too much to claim that Christianity is literally founded on a covenantal or federal form of theology, drawing its meaning and logic from the history of a two-stage alliance: the first between God and Israel, and the second between God and mankind at large. The Bible as a whole is the narrative of this contractual relationship, of its avatars and expansion in time.³ Indeed the very terms Old and New Testaments are synonyms for the pact concluded, broken and then renewed, initially for the salvation of a single people, and later for all nations. The word 'testament', was derived from the Latin adaptation of the Greek *'diathéké'*, which translated the Hebrew *'berith'*, meaning an alliance. Biblical equivalents of *testamentum* in the Vulgate are *pactum* and *fœdus*, the latter word explaining the adjective 'federal' applied to the doctrine postulating an alliance between God and men. And it is worth recalling that the word 'faith' is derived, through the French, from the Latin *'fides'*, which is a cognate of *'fœdus'*. A covenant theologian would therefore maintain that faith is a form of fidelity to God's alliance.

In an important sense, however – a point constantly emphasized by reformed divines for whom it formed the backbone of Christian theology – the enlargement of the first covenant by the second did not amount to a covenant at all, for it simply renewed the promise of eternal life made by God to Adam, which could hardly be limited to a specific people as yet unborn. Just as Adam's sin had made all men mortal, so Christ's sacrifice on the Cross brought possible salvation to all; hence the strict correspondence established by Paul between Adam, 'the figure of him that was to come', and Christ (Rom. 5:14); and hence also the abundance of commentaries produced by the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, notably Augustine, on the parallel between the fatal consequence for mankind of Adam's transgression and the universal benefit of Christ's redemptive death.⁴ Any typological reading of the Bible was bound to stress the primary kinship between the old and the new covenants, representative of God's determination to save men or, at least, those of them who enter his alliance and prove faithful to it. Even a theologian seldom

associated with covenant theology like Thomas Aquinas points to the parallels in his picture of the 'very many figures' of the Old Testament announcing Christ's action, of which 'the wooden Ark of the Covenant' is archetypal, being among the 'steps by which we mount to the wood of the Cross'.⁵ Catholic tradition fully acknowledged the central role of the covenant in Christian doctrine, as confirmed by the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

The Church, as early as apostolic times, and then constantly in her Tradition, has illuminated the unity of the divine plan in the two Testaments through typology, which discerns in God's works of the Old Covenant prefigurations of what he accomplished in the fullness of time in the person of his incarnate Son.⁶

As with most of the concepts it sought to revalue, the Reformation did not innovate in putting the covenant at the heart of its biblical theology. It simply gave it greater prominence, building it into a consistent hermeneutic and laying heavy emphasis on Adam as an Old Testament 'figure' for Christ; a shift corresponding to the decision to stress obedience and disobedience, notions inherent in covenanting. This development began with Calvin, who insisted both on the essential unity of the two biblical covenants and on their differences in character, paving the way for the distinction between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace that was to be the mainstay of covenant theology. Calvin established the first point by arguing that in both covenants, God's offer of eternal life excluded any merit on man's part.⁷ Both the Old and the New Testaments were to be read as the gradual unveiling in human history of a single promise administered in different ways but aiming at one and the same goal, salvation.⁸ Successive dispensations of the covenant pointed to various differences between the old and the new covenants. The main one was that, while the Old Testament rested on a 'doctrine of the letter', which was a 'deadly one', involving 'the whole human race in a curse', the New Testament was inspired by a 'doctrine of the spirit', which made it an 'instrument of life', freeing men from that curse and restoring them 'to favour with God'.⁹

Calvin's interpretation of the covenant was obviously dependent on his doctrine of salvation, in other words on the notion that faith alone, as an effect of God's grace, can save without works. It was therefore a logical move for Calvin's disciples to take the further

step of identifying in the Old Testament a covenant of works and in the New Testament a covenant of grace. That this elaboration of Calvin's ideas was accomplished in many quarters of Protestant Europe is clearly demonstrated by the recurrence of those views in most expositions of reformed doctrine. The Canons of Dort of 1619, which aimed at setting down Calvinist orthodoxy in a counterattack against the Arminian Remonstrance of 1610, rejected the errors of those who 'teach that the purpose of Christ's death was not to establish in actual fact a new covenant of grace by his blood, but only to acquire for the Father the mere right to enter once more into a covenant with men, whether of grace or of works'.¹⁰ Puritan England, which enthusiastically took up those views, is another case in point if one refers to such primary documents as the presbyterian-inspired *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1646), the Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order (1658) or John Owen's Greater Catechism. Such views were to remain commonplace in later Calvinist doctrinal texts, as shown by the *Formula Consensus Helvetica* (1675), largely the work of Francis Turretin.

The essence of the doctrine received particularly forceful expression in the synthesis provided by the Dutch theologian Herman Witsius (1636–1708), under the telling title *Œconomia fœderum Dei cum hominibus* (1667). To this day Witsius is generally believed to be the foremost exponent of Protestant covenant theology. The covenant, Witsius wrote, comprises 'three things in general. 1stly. A *promise* of consummate happiness in eternal life. 2ndly. A *designation* and *prescription* of the condition, by the performance of which man acquires a right to the promise. 3rdly. A *penal sanction* against those who do not come up to the prescribed condition'.¹¹ This structure can be found in the two covenants instanced in Scripture: 'the covenant of works, otherwise called the covenant of nature, or the legal; and the covenant of grace', the distinction having been first drawn by Paul in Romans 3:27 'where he mentions the law of works and the law of faith'.¹² The two covenants pertain to different 'economies', although the presence of the covenant of grace can be perceived throughout the Old Testament, 'under the veil of certain types'.¹³ Their common features touch on the substance of the alliance: the parties are the same (God and man); they contain the same promise (eternal life); they rest on the same condition (man's

obedience); and they pursue the same end (God's glory).¹⁴ Their differences are to be explained in terms of the modes of administration chosen, which come down to the fact that God acts as a law-giver in the former and as a dispenser of justice in the latter, through the mediation of Christ. Scripture, Witsius argued, tells us the way the covenant of grace gradually passed from the 'shadows' to the fore and prevailed gloriously in the fulfilment of Christ's mission.

Although not all divines agreed on the moment when the New Testament formally succeeded the Old, all agreed that 'the Old Testament was of right abrogated' with the death of Christ. Yet 'there was a greater accession of solemnity to the New' at Pentecost, 'upon the plentiful effusion of the Spirit on the apostles, when the doctrine of salvation was proclaimed over all the habitable world'.¹⁵ And this was held to be the completion of a process eternally at work within the godhead, and deducible from the concept of the Trinity, which ultimately makes covenant doctrine theologically intelligible, a doctrine whose economy Witsius emphasized:

The economy of the Persons of the Trinity in the covenant of grace, claims also our attention. The FATHER is held forth as the principal Author of it, "who was in Christ reconciling the world to himself", 2 Cor. v. 19. and appointed the Elect to be heirs of himself, and joint heirs with his Son, Rom. viii. 17. The SON is not only Mediator, and executor of the covenant, but is himself also the testator, who by his death ratified the testament of grace, Luke xxii. 29. Heb. ix. 16. and the distributer of all the blessings of it. "I give unto them eternal life", John x. 28. The SPIRIT brings the Elect to Christ, and, in Christ, to the possession of the benefits of the covenant, intimates to their consciences *ta odia tou Daudid ta pisa* the holy pledges, the sure mercies of David, and is the seal and earnest of their complete happiness, 1 Cor. xii. 3, 11, 12. Eph. i. 13, 14.¹⁶

Covenant theology was firmly rooted in traditional Christian doctrine, as suggested by this reference to the trinitarian framework. The same could be said about its adherence to the concept of Mediator and its use of typology. This may explain why, despite the claim of 'orthodox' reformed divines to be its sole true advocates, it found committed supporters in other Protestant circles like Arminius.¹⁷

3. HOBBS AND COVENANT THEOLOGY

Given this general background, it is hardly surprising that Hobbes's writings should contain so many traces of covenant theology; traces that amount in fact to what one might consider a federal system of theology. The 'prophetic' kingdom of God, that which included Jews at first and Christians in a second stage, rests on a pact from which its proper nature as a kingdom is derived. Hobbes writes on the subject:

I find the KINGDOM OF GOD to signify, in most places of Scripture, *a kingdom properly so named*, constituted by the votes of the people of Israel in peculiar manner, wherein they chose God for their king by covenant made with him, upon God's promising them the possession of the land of Canaan, and but seldom metaphorically; and then it is taken for *dominion over sin* (and only in the New Testament), because such a dominion as that every subject shall have in the kingdom of God, and without prejudice to the sovereign.¹⁸

The so-called 'natural' kingdom of God, by contrast, rests on a form of divine dominion that is purely figurative:¹⁹

to call this power of God (which extendeth itself not only to man, but also to beasts, and plants, and bodies inanimate) by the name of kingdom is but a metaphorical use of the word. For he only is properly said to reign that governs his subjects by his word, and by promise of rewards to those that obey it, and by threatening them with punishment that obey it not.²⁰

Although the word 'covenant' was never used to describe it, the relationship between God and Adam nevertheless had some of the characteristics of a covenant; it was a promise joined to a commandment (or ban) on the part of God, and an implicit pledge of obedience on the part of Adam. Only with Abraham, was a covenant strictly speaking concluded (see Gen. 17:7–8), according to Hobbes, with an explicit exchange of promises – possession of the land of Canaan against perpetual fidelity to God – and sealed by a 'memorial' and 'token', which was the '*sacrament of circumcision*'. This pact, Hobbes asserts, established a pattern for future relations between God and his chosen people:

This is it which is called the *Old Covenant*, or *Testament*, and containeth a contract between God and Abraham, by which Abraham obligeth himself and his posterity, in a peculiar manner, to be subject to God's positive law (for to the law moral he was obliged before) as by an oath of allegiance. And though the name of *King* be not yet given to God, nor of *Kingdom* to

Abraham and his seed, yet the thing is the same: namely, an institution by pact of God's peculiar sovereignty over the seed of Abraham; which in the renewing of the same covenant by Moses, at Mount Sinai, is expressly called a peculiar *Kingdom of God* over the Jews and it is of Abraham (not of Moses) St. Paul saith (Rom. 4:11) that he is the *father of the faithful*, that is, of those that are loyal, and do not violate their allegiance sworn to God, then by circumcision, and afterwards in the *New Covenant* by baptism.²¹

The laws that Moses gave to the Jews completed the historical process that saw the transformation of Israel into a kingdom with God as its monarch, contractually empowered to govern and legislate through the medium of a human representative or 'lieutenant'. The covenant thus concluded suffered various vicissitudes nevertheless, principal among them being the election of Saul, a rupture that saw the rejection by Israel of God's kingship in favour of its own sovereign. It was this defection that made Christ's restorative intervention necessary:

In short, the kingdom of God is a civil kingdom, which consisted first in the obligation of the people of Israel to those laws which Moses should bring unto them from Mount Sinai (and which afterwards the high priest for the time being should deliver to them from before the *cherubims* in the *sanctum sanctorum*) and which kingdom having been cast off in the election of Saul, the prophets foretold should be restored by Christ.²²

Christ's mission was then to renew the covenant that had been broken by establishing a new one that, in the event the Jews failed to accept it, would include all Gentiles disposed to accept him as their Saviour. On the purpose of Christ's first coming, Hobbes states:

It was to restore unto God, by a new covenant, the kingdom which, being his by the old covenant, had been cut off by the rebellion of the Israelites in the election of Saul. Which to do, he was to preach unto them that he was the Messiah, that is, the king promised to them by the prophets, and to offer himself in sacrifice for the sins of them that should by faith submit themselves thereto, and in case the nation generally should refuse him, to call to his obedience such as should believe in him amongst the Gentiles.²³

By his sacrifice on the cross Christ did much more than just renew the old abrahamic covenant, therefore; he achieved the remission of sins of all believers, thus effacing the consequences of Adam's disobedience. While original sin had made it radically impossible for

man to respond with perfect obedience to God's offer of eternal life, Christ's death obtained the fruits of submission for all those who had faith in him. In keeping with the doctrine of Protestant theologians, Hobbes described the benefits of the two pacts as being reserved for the elect. It was for the elect exclusively that miracles were performed, both in the time of the Old Testament and in the time of the New: 'We may further observe in Scripture that the end of miracles was to beget belief, not universally in all men (elect and reprobate), but in the elect only, that is to say, in such as God had determined should become his subjects'.²⁴ Christ's death was ordained with the express purpose of salvation; God 'determined his sacrifice for the reduction of his elect to their former covenanted obedience'.²⁵ The end of this covenant for mankind, is 'the life eternal which the elect shall enjoy by grace'.²⁶

One last key element connecting Hobbes's doctrine with covenant theology, little commented upon, is his explicit resort to typology. Many examples of this practice concern the person of Christ. As shown earlier, the Paulinian correspondence between Adam and Christ is clearly underlined. Christ's sacrifice is also identified in the immolation of a goat according to the ritual of the 'old law', and here Hobbes's commentary leaves no doubt about his familiarity with the typological hermeneutic:

As the sacrifice of the one goat was a sufficient (because an acceptable) price for the ransom of all Israel, so the death of the Messiah is a sufficient price for the sins of all mankind, because there was no more required. Our Saviour Christ's sufferings seem to be here figured, as clearly as in the oblation of Isaac, or in any of the other type [= symbol] of him in the Old Testament.²⁷

Christ is presented by Hobbes as having been foreshadowed by Old Testament prophets, in particular by Moses. In the kingdom to come, Hobbes says he will be 'as Moses was in the wilderness', 'for it is one of the prophecies concerning Christ that he should be like (in office) to Moses'.²⁸ Nor does he stop at this general statement, pursuing the parallel in various ways:

And this similitude with Moses is also apparent in the actions of our Saviour himself, whilst he was conversant on earth. For as Moses chose twelve princes of the tribes to govern under him, so did our Saviour choose twelve apostles, who shall sit on twelve thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. And as Moses authorized seventy elders to receive the spirit of God,

and to prophesy to the people (that is, as I have said before, to speak unto them in the name of God), so our Saviour also ordained seventy disciples, to preach his kingdom, and salvation to all nations. And as when a complaint was made to Moses, against those of the seventy that prophesied in the camp of Israel, he justified them in it, as being subservient therein to his government, so also our Saviour, when St. John complained to him of a certain man that cast out devils in his name, justified him therein, saying (Luke 9:50) 'Forbid him not, for he that is not against us, is on our part'.²⁹

Christ 'resembled Moses' in a further respect, namely 'in the institution of sacraments, both of *admission* into the kingdom of God, and of *commemoration* of his deliverance of his elect from their miserable condition'. Moses reestablished the rite of circumcision, which had fallen into neglect, and this was paralleled by the Jewish custom of 'washing with water all those that being Gentiles, embraced the God of Israel' – the rite adopted by John the Baptist for 'the reception of all them that gave their names to the Christ'; 'and our Saviour himself instituted the same for a sacrament to be taken by all that believed in him'.³⁰ It may be, Hobbes surmises, that this form of baptism was borrowed by the Jews from a habit concerning leprosy, 'wherein the leprous man was commanded to be kept out of the camp of Israel for a certain time, after which time, being judged by the priest to be clean, he was admitted into the camp after a solemn washing'. Hobbes's comment again makes the typological reading explicit: 'And this may, therefore, be a type of the washing in baptism, wherein such men as are cleansed of the leprosy of sin by faith are received into the Church with the solemnity of baptism'.³¹ Similarly, the Lord's Supper imitates in a symbolic way the eating of the paschal lamb: 'the breaking of the bread and the pouring out of the wine do keep in memory our deliverance from the misery of sin by Christ's passion, as the eating of the paschal lamb kept in memory the deliverance of the Jews out of the bondage of Egypt'.³²

4. HOBBS ON PREDESTINATION AND COVENANT

Much in Hobbes's doctrine is reminiscent of covenant theology in its most conventional versions. Nor are these similarities trivial, bearing on such essential aspects of covenant doctrine as, for instance, the federal relations between God and man, the continuity between the two covenants, the substitution of faith in Christ for obedience to

law, the restriction of the second covenant's benefits to the elect, and the typological approach to Scripture. It is true that Hobbes does not explicitly take up the distinction between a covenant of works and a covenant of grace. However, the notion of grace does play a crucial role in his formal theology. This suggests, or rather confirms, Hobbes's adherence to the problematic of faith versus works as a means to salvation – a problematic that underpins his disquisitions on faith as opposed to law, as it operates in both God's kingdoms, the old and the new.³³ Several texts support this interpretation. The commentary provided in Hebrews 11:5 on Enoch's translation to heaven, according to Hobbes, 'proveth that this his translation was peculiar to them that please God, not common to them with the wicked; and depending on grace, not on nature'.³⁴ His frequent reference to a 'kingdom of grace' to designate God's kingdom rests on the same notion.³⁵

Although the link between Hobbes and covenant theologians has been taken into account by some commentators, its analysis has been inadequate, either due to misinterpretation or misplaced emphasis. Two basic arguments have been formulated against drawing parallels between Hobbes and covenant theologians. One is that Hobbes's own system of ideas is not consistent, political premises making it impossible for him to elaborate any real covenantal theology. So on the basis of an analysis of the various passages in *Leviathan* dealing with pacts, Edwin Curley argues that Hobbes's secular doctrine of the covenant cannot apply to any form of contract between God and men for several fundamental reasons.³⁶ One is that God's omnipotence – evidenced by his natural kingdom that includes all living creatures and rests on his irresistible might – precludes the possibility of any transfer of rights from men to God. Another reason, closely related, is that Hobbes's God, being omnipotent, would have nothing to gain from a covenant with men. Finally, the fact much insisted upon by Hobbes, that the sovereign cannot be a party to the social contract, makes it unthinkable that God should establish his sovereignty over men through a covenant with them.³⁷

This interpretation presupposes, first, that the God of covenant theologians (most of them strict Calvinists) was not omnipotent, which would certainly have scandalized them. One way of answering the objection would be to say that the idea of predestination is incompatible with that of covenant. But this would mean rejecting, contrary to Christian tradition, any idea of predestination in the

name of the two covenants concluded between God and men. It is a fact that covenant theologians, even those of them who advocated a supralapsarian doctrine of predestination like the authors of the canons of Dort, fully endorsed the view of an omnipotent God condescending to propose an alliance to man, and even to renew his offer. If there is a logical flaw in the theory, then it is not peculiar to Hobbes. Needless to say covenant theologians were well aware of this objection and did their best to counter it. The solutions they supplied seem to meet the challenge of an 'impossible' transfer of rights from men to God. So, to engage in a covenant 'with the rational creature, formed after the divine image, is entirely worthy of, and by no means unbecoming of God', as Witsius explicitly argues.³⁸ It is a consequence of God's nature, which is both perfect and benevolent, for 'God cannot but bind man to love, worship, and seek him as the chief good'.³⁹ For the same reason, it is 'not conceivable, how God should require man to love and seek him, and yet refuse to be found by man'.⁴⁰ Finally, 'the justice of God no less requires that man, upon rejecting the happiness, offered on the most equitable terms, should be punished with the privation of it, and likewise incur the severest indignation of God, whom he has despised'.⁴¹

The entire argument is played out in the language of covenanting. Man, for his part, could not refuse God's offer of an alliance, 'in virtue of the law, which universally binds him, humbly to accept everything proposed by God'; 'on account of the high sovereignty of God', who is not accountable for the way he proffers his gifts; because of 'that love, which man naturally owes to himself, and by which he is carried to the chief good'; and by reason of his conscience, which 'dictates that this covenant is in all parts highly equitable'.⁴² In short, it must be admitted that 'this covenant, as subsisting between parties infinitely unequal, assumes the nature of those, which the Greeks called *Injunctions*, or *covenants from commands*'.⁴³ At last, although 'it is not left to man to accept or reject at pleasure God's covenant',⁴⁴ it is perfectly logical to acknowledge the fact that 'God, by this covenant, acquires no new right over man'.⁴⁵ Being 'the blessed and self-sufficient Being', God does not need any new title to dominion, and his power can be neither increased nor diminished. On the other hand, 'man, upon his accepting the covenant, and performing the condition, does acquire some right to demand of God the promise; for God has, by his promises, made himself a debtor to man'.⁴⁶

There appears to be no incompatibility in covenant theology, then, between either the idea of divine omnipotence, or that of the absence of any new right accruing to God from the alliance with man, and the offer of such a pact. God's perfection and his desire to be glorified by a peculiar nation or part of mankind devoted to the celebration of his greatness, together with man's natural attraction to his own good, suffice to legitimize the institution of the covenant. Claiming that God derives no new right from this contract is not a valid criticism against covenant theology, not in general nor in its Hobbesian version. As A. P. Martinich rightly points out, it is wrong to believe that being a party to a covenant necessarily means acquiring rights; two persons may covenant to give something to a third one, by which they will gain nothing; thus the social contract deprives those who enter it of the right to everything they enjoyed in the state of nature.⁴⁷ It would seem equally true to say that, from the observation that it is not necessary for God to covenant with man to expand his dominion, it is wrong to conclude that God cannot establish contractual relations with his creature – unless one postulates that God's actions must be determined by some extrinsic necessity, which would be quite un-Hobbesian.

As for the analogy between civil and 'sacred' covenants,⁴⁸ it is certainly well grounded, both in terms of prevailing covenant theology and the consistency with which Hobbes applies it, connecting his theology to his politics in an original and legitimate manner.⁴⁹ But this claim again challenges Curley's case, which rests entirely on the principle that a sovereign can never be party to a covenant.⁵⁰ The validity of this principle, to which Hobbes does in fact subscribe, is restricted to sovereignty by institution, created 'when men agree amongst themselves to submit to some man, or assembly of men, voluntarily, on confidence to be protected by him against all others'.⁵¹ The reasons why the sovereign cannot be party to the agreement in social contract that effects the transition from the state of nature, rest on arguments too well known to need repeating.⁵² However, it may be useful to recall that the situation is quite different with the commonwealth by acquisition, 'where the sovereign power is acquired by force'.⁵³ The idea of God's irresistible power may invite us to believe that divine sovereignty belongs to that type of dominion – which is more probable and, moreover, in keeping with the admission of covenant theologians that man cannot refuse to covenant with God,

given the 'infinite' inequality of force between them. But this in no way precludes a contractual relation, nor does it imply at all that God cannot fulfil the covenant he has offered to man. '*A commonwealth by acquisition*', Hobbes writes, 'is acquired by force when men singly (or many together by plurality of voices) for fear of death or bonds do authorize all the actions of that man or assembly that hath their lives and liberty in his power'.⁵⁴

It seems undeniable that the sovereign so invested is a party to the covenant. Dominion based on force or conquest is 'acquired to the victor when the vanquished, to avoid the present stroke of death, covenanteth either in express words, or by other sufficient signs of the will, that so long as his life and the liberty of his body is allowed him, the victor shall have the use thereof, at his pleasure'.⁵⁵ And certainly allowing his life and liberty to the vanquished is hard to imagine without an explicit agreement on the part of the victor. Hobbes's additional commentary corroborates this reading: 'It is not therefore the victory that giveth the right of dominion over the vanquished, but his own covenant'.⁵⁶ The victor's 'promise of life' is the counterpart to the submission of the vanquished. The mutual character of the pact is what makes it a source of obligations for both parties. This is what happened in the covenant between God and men: the Jews 'chose God for their king by covenant made with him, upon God's promising them the possession of the land of Canaan'. Needless to say shared participation in this alliance does not diminish God's power, or affect it in any way, given that 'the rights and consequences of sovereignty are the same' in dominion by institution and dominion by acquisition alike.⁵⁷ In other words, the fact of the sovereign enjoying absolute power does not mean that he has no obligations towards his subjects. Equally, there seems to be no incompatibility between God's 'natural' power over all men and the power he acquires by covenanting with a fraction of them. The one premise does not invalidate the other because they apply to different zones of power, one 'by nature', and the other acquired by right under the terms of a contract, as demonstrated by Jewish precedent:

the first table of the commandments is spent all in setting down the sum of God's absolute power, not only as God, but as king by pact (in peculiar) of the Jews, and may therefore give light to those that have sovereign power conferred on them by the consent of men, to see what doctrine they ought to teach their subjects.⁵⁸

5. CRITICS OF HOBBS AND COVENANT THEOLOGY

A different argument against drawing a parallel between Hobbes's theology and that of the covenant theologians focuses on the political aspects of the case. The major issue at stake is the question of biblical interpretation.⁵⁹ By insisting that the sustained and correct reading of Scripture is the means to every individual's moral comfort and spiritual salvation, covenant theologians tended to reduce theology to hermeneutics. A proper understanding of the nature of the divine alliance, which in their eyes is the key to Scripture, appears to them of such decisive importance that they ultimately advocate the absolute autonomy of the interpreter – whether this is the ordinary reader or a learned divine – who must be unaccountable to any earthly authority in his/her search for truth. Although – or rather because – he acknowledges the primary importance of biblical interpretation in a Christian commonwealth, Hobbes builds his own theory in radical opposition to such a conception, going so far as to banish the notion of alliance from his account of the kingdom of God. Although every believer must have free access to Scripture, biblical interpretation as such, which may lead to socially disruptive controversies, must be regarded as pertaining to the province of the sovereign or of his duly appointed ecclesiastical representatives. Interpretation is as much a legal and political matter as it is a theological one, and must therefore be strictly controlled so as to limit the risks of manipulation and abuse. What is at issue in Hobbes's rejection of covenant theology is the question of power, the saving power of Scripture, read with the help of a covenantal code, versus the sovereign's power to censure the public expression of religious doctrines in order to ensure civil peace.

There is much to be said in favour of this construction. It is certainly true that covenant theology *is* a form of hermeneutic, as shown by the critical role it assigns to typology, and that any hermeneutic, from a Hobbesian perspective, inevitably has political consequences that raise the issue of right. It is indeed impossible to separate the notions of *interpretatio* and *potestas*. But my main objection to this approach is that, quite apart from the fact that it ascribes to Hobbes a debatable *a priori* hostility to covenant theology, it gives to an interpretative procedure the status of an end instead of a means, and thereby alters the basis of Hobbes's political treatment of covenant

theology. Perhaps it will help to start from politics, so as better to apprehend the proper grounds of Hobbes's peculiar relation to covenant theology. Admittedly, the very idea of a covenant with God is problematic because it implies a supernatural communication that is difficult, if not impossible, to verify, both in terms of its contents and its validity. That is why, as a matter of principle, a covenant with God must be excluded from the list of covenants: 'To make covenant with God is impossible, but by mediation of such as God speaketh to (either by revelation supernatural or by his lieutenants that govern under him and in his name); for otherwise we know not whether our covenants be accepted or not'.⁶⁰ The mention of God's 'lieutenants that govern under him' introduces the critical factor, amplified and clarified in the next passage, where Hobbes examines the rights of sovereigns by institution:

And whereas some men have pretended for their disobedience to their sovereign a new covenant, made (not with men, but) with God, this also is unjust; for there is no covenant with God but by mediation of somebody that representeth God's person, which none doth but God's lieutenant, who hath the sovereignty under God. But this pretence of covenant with God is so evident a lie, even in the pretenders' own consciences, that it is not only an act of an unjust, but also of a vile and unmanly disposition.⁶¹

Martinich has rightly pointed out that this passage almost certainly contains an allusion to the Covenanters of the 1640s, Scottish and English, who alleged a pact with God in order to justify their rebellion against royal authority.⁶² Clearly Hobbes believes that the connection between the two covenants – civil and 'sacred' – is problematic in itself, as opening the way (confirmed by historical experience) to rebellion against lawful governments in the name of allegiance to a higher power, namely God himself.⁶³ The danger is particularly menacing in those Christian states where citizens might regard themselves as parties to two distinct pacts and therefore as members of two distinct commonwealths, creating possible divided loyalties. The risk of state dissolution would be all the greater in the case of a man faced (that is, believing himself faced) with an obligation to choose between the sovereign's commands and those of God, 'the sovereign of all sovereigns', and feeling bound to follow God's. What is at issue in this type of situation is not the primacy of God's instructions but rather the validity of the claim that one

has received such instructions. When Hobbes writes that a 'doctrine repugnant to civil society is that *whatsoever a man does against his conscience is sin*',⁶⁴ he does not condemn the principle of following the dictates of one's conscience (and, therefore, God's commands if one believes conscience to be God's voice), but rather the conviction that private conscience can *never* err, which is another issue and entirely false, leading to grave political errors. It is essential, therefore, to verify the truth of any allegation of direct communication from God:

It is true that God is the sovereign of all sovereigns; and therefore, when he speaks to any subject, he ought to be obeyed, whatsoever any earthly potentate command to the contrary. But the question is not of obedience to God, but of *when* and *what* God hath said; which to subjects that have no supernatural revelation cannot be known but by that natural reason which guided them, for the obtaining of peace and justice, to obey the authority of their several commonwealths (that is to say, of their lawful sovereigns).⁶⁵

6. THE CASE FOR HOBBS AS AN UNORTHODOX COVENANT THEOLOGIAN

It is against this background that the singularity of Hobbes's relation to covenant theology must be appreciated. As tends to be the case with him, Hobbes's strategy is not one of criticism and rejection but rather of subversive integration. When Hobbes writes, in a passage already quoted, that 'there is no covenant with God but by mediation of somebody that representeth God's person, which none doth but God's lieutenant who hath the sovereignty under God',⁶⁶ he is pointing to the decisive role of the mediator in any process of contracting with God – a critical point on which all covenant theologians were agreed. Two types of mediator could be envisaged: prophets under the old dispensation, and that Mediator *par excellence*, namely Christ, under the new.⁶⁷ The power of the mediator in general, to communicate with God and to convey God's will to men, was taken for granted. And it was the role of a proper Mediator that Christ specifically played, insofar as he acted as God's intermediary, fulfilling for the elect of all nations the promise of salvation made to the Jews. What is Hobbes's treatment of these *topoi* then? Regarding prophets, he maintained that they belong to two categories: first Old Testament prophets, and second 'ordinary' prophets – that is, men who

simply claim to be divinely inspired – of whom there were all too many in England during the revolutionary period.

The second category is the easiest one to dispose of. None of the reasons that 'ordinary' prophets can invoke to prove that God has spoken to them is credible. All that can be surmised is that they have had dreams or visions which they represent as supernatural revelations. But 'though God Almighty can speak to a man by dreams, visions, voice, and inspiration, yet he obliges no man to believe he hath done so to him that pretends it, who (being a man) may err, and (which is more) may lie'.⁶⁸ As for 'prophets extraordinary', it must be admitted that they also 'took notice of the word of God no otherwise than from their dreams or visions, that is to say, from the imaginations which they had in their sleep or in an ecstasy'.⁶⁹ They performed miracles, but so did false prophets, as demonstrated by the example of Egyptian sorcerers, and as confirmed by Christ.⁷⁰ Unlike false prophets, they taught doctrines that were not likely to stir up revolt against existing authorities, but that fact is insufficient to prove that they were in direct contact with God.⁷¹ In brief, all that can be said is that they were convinced God had spoken to them, without any acceptable demonstration of the validity of their claim. We may believe that these epiphanies took place – we must, if we profess Christianity – but no factual or rational argument can compel us to believe in their contents. The same holds for the assertion that Jesus was the Messiah and Saviour – once again a startling conclusion on the part of a self-proclaimed Christian philosopher:

for the person whom we believe, because it is impossible to believe any person before we know what he saith, it is necessary he be the one that we have heard speak. The person, therefore, whom Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and the prophets believed was God himself, that spake unto them supernaturally. And the person whom the apostles and disciples that conversed with Christ believed was our Saviour himself. But of them to whom neither God the father, nor our Saviour ever spake, it cannot be said that the person whom they believed was God. They believed the apostles, and after them the pastors and doctors of the Church, that recommended to their faith the history of the Old and New Testament.⁷²

Hobbes concludes from this examination that, in brief, no one can determine with any degree of certainty what it means to say that God has spoken to any man.⁷³ *Believing* that such communication has

taken place is a question of faith, which, although a 'gift of God',⁷⁴ depends both on *reputation* – that of priests – and *authority* – that of sovereigns who have imposed Scripture as the basis of religion.⁷⁵ As for human mediators between God and men, excepting in the case of lawful sovereigns, Christians are left with claims and testimonies whose truthfulness it is up to each of them to assess. Reason teaches that Christian sovereigns must be regarded as 'the supreme pastors and the only persons whom Christians now hear speak from God'.⁷⁶ And in that respect reason receives strong support from historical experience, which shows the mortal dangers for the commonwealth of trusting the words of self-proclaimed spokesmen of God. No doubt with the English revolutionary background again in mind, Hobbes writes:

For when Christian men take not their Christian sovereign for God's prophet, they must either take their own dreams for the prophecy they mean to be governed by, and the tumor of their own hearts for the Spirit of God, or they must suffer themselves to be led by some strange prince or by some of their fellow-subjects that can bewitch them, by slander of the government, into rebellion (without other miracle to confirm their calling than sometimes an extraordinary success and impunity), and by this means destroying all laws, both divine and human, reduce all order, government, and society to the first chaos of violence and civil war.⁷⁷

7. ON CHRIST'S MEDIATION

The Mediator *par excellence*, who according to covenant theology can do infinitely more than a spokesman or interpreter, is Christ himself. From this viewpoint the doctrine was again perfectly consonant with Catholic tradition.⁷⁸ Christ is not merely an intermediary in the second covenant; he is its agent, bringing salvation by forfeiting his own life. He obtained the remission of the sins of those who believed in him while he was on earth, but the reconciliation he achieved between God and men extends for all time. His advent was prefigured in the various manifestations of the first covenant, and his kingdom includes all past adherents to the promise and all believers to come. The continuity between the two covenants explains why the Jews, although under the law of an earlier dispensation, could receive the benefit of grace, as Calvin argued.⁷⁹ Faith in the Kingdom

of God, divided as it is between two dispensations, is what binds the elect of the Old Testament to the elect of the New, according to covenant theology. So Calvin wrote of Christ's 'kingly office': 'it were in vain to speak, without previously reminding the reader, that its nature is spiritual; because it is from thence we learn its efficacy, the benefits it confers, its whole power and eternity'.⁸⁰ The fact that believers can feel through faith the fruits of their election proves the continued existence of Christ's kingdom throughout both dispensations; a doctrine stressed in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.⁸¹

This saving work which Christ performs as Mediator is made possible by his double nature: God's justice is satisfied by the sacrifice of the perfect man that he was, while the efficacy of this sacrifice is due to his full participation in the divine nature. As Calvin writes:

the work to be performed by the Mediator was of no common description: being to restore us to the divine favour, so as to make us, instead of sons of men, sons of God; instead of heirs of hell, heirs of a heavenly kingdom. Who could do this unless the Son of God should also become the Son of man, and so receive what is ours as to transfer to us what is his, making that which is his by nature to become ours by grace?⁸²

On no point did Protestant covenant theology agree more thoroughly with Catholic doctrine. So Aquinas had maintained that: 'Although it belongs to Christ as God to take away sin authoritatively, yet it belongs to Him, as man, to satisfy for the sin of the human race. And in this sense He is called the Mediator of God and men'.⁸³

How did Hobbes deal with those themes?⁸⁴ Regarding Christ's kingdom he wrote, it 'is not to begin till the resurrection'.⁸⁵ Against Calvin he maintained that Christ's kingdom is not to be understood in a spiritual sense; it will exist on earth at the Second Coming and will comprise mortal creatures, over whom Christ will reign 'in his human nature', surrounded by the apostles whom he will make 'judges of the twelve tribes of Israel'.⁸⁶ Then he will be king, which was impossible at the time of his first coming, since he could not be 'king of those that he redeemed before he suffered death'.⁸⁷ His passage on this earth is engulfed in a vast era extending between the Flood and his second coming, during which the renewal of the covenant seems to have been achieved only by his teaching. Hobbes

writes about not two dispensations, but three periods into which human history is divided, a pattern reminiscent of Joachim of Fiore:

There are three worlds mentioned in Scripture, the *old world*, the *present world*, and the *world to come*. Of the first, St. Peter speaks (2 Pet. 2:5) 'If God spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing the flood upon the world of the ungodly,' &c. So the *first world* was from Adam to the general flood. Of the present world, our Saviour speaks (John 18:36) *My kingdom is not of this world*. For he came only to teach men the way of salvation, and to renew the kingdom of his Father by his doctrine. Of the world to come, St. Peter speaks (2 Pet. 3:13) 'Nevertheless, we according to his promise look for heavens and a new earth.' This is that *WORLD* wherein Christ, coming down from heaven in the clouds, with great power and glory, shall send his angels, and shall gather together his elect, from the four winds and from the uttermost parts of the earth, and thenceforth reign over them (under his Father) everlastingly.⁸⁸

Hobbes's insistence that the renewal of the covenant is accomplished by the teaching mission of Jesus is reinforced by his detailed analysis of Christ's office. Christ fulfilled the main purpose of his mission as a priest, that is, by preaching and teaching, or by trying to 'persuade' men, Hobbes emphasizes in a passage that makes no mention of His redemptive and royal functions:

So that there are two parts of our Saviour's office during his abode upon the earth: one to proclaim himself the Christ; and another, by teaching and by working of miracles, to persuade and prepare men to live so as to be worthy of the immortality believers were to enjoy, at such time as he should come in majesty to take possession of his Father's kingdom.⁸⁹

The clear outcome of the chapter is to reduce Christ to a man, just as the Old Testament prophets were men, as shown by Hobbes's repeated assimilation of Christ to Moses and other biblical characters throughout *Leviathan*.⁹⁰ Returning to the subject of Christ's kingdom, Hobbes now presents Jesus as a viceregent, surely in violation of the orthodox resolution to the great problematic of the third century, whether the persons of the Trinity proceeded from God the Father, and were therefore inferior to him, or were equal to the Father. The latter position was deemed orthodox, while the former position, that of the arians, was deemed heretical. Hobbes argues notwithstanding that Christ as God's viceregent is subordinate to the Father:

Again, he is to be king then, no otherwise than as subordinate or viceregent of God the Father, as Moses was in the wilderness, and as the high priests were before the reign of Saul, and as kings were after it. For it is one of the prophecies concerning Christ that he should be like (in office) to Moses.⁹¹

The antitrinitarian implications of these assertions are reinforced at the end of the chapter when Hobbes begins to unveil his own highly unorthodox notion of the Trinity – once again a position he recanted in the 1668 Appendix to the Latin *Leviathan*:

Our Saviour, therefore, both in teaching and reigning, representeth (as Moses did) the person of God; which God (from the time forward, but not before) is called the Father; and being still one and the same substance, is one person as represented by Moses, and another person as represented by his son the Christ.⁹²

The Holy Spirit is missing, mentioned only in the full definition of the Trinity provided in the next chapter, where Hobbes's assimilation of the three divine persons to purely human representatives caused such an outcry as to force his partial, and far from convincing, recantation in the Appendix to the 1668 Latin *Leviathan*:

so God the Father, as represented by Moses, is one person; and as represented by his Son, another person; and as represented by the apostles, and by the doctors that taught by authority from them derived, is a third person; and yet every person here is the person of one and the same God.⁹³

However, there were two valuable political advantages to be drawn from his christological doctrine, which Hobbes did not fail to exploit at length in the last chapters of *Leviathan*. The first was to demonstrate that the Church of Rome had no historical or theological basis for claiming divine institution. Granted that it had been created by Christ, its existence was nevertheless due to a man, and not to someone who was both God *and* man.⁹⁴ The second was to deny either Rome or the Presbyterian Church the right to claim the authority of Christ's eternal kingdom as a means of disguising their political ambitions in spiritual dress. In that respect, Hobbes argued, the Reformation had seen no change in clerical strategies, as demonstrated by the examples of those countries – Geneva, Scotland, and possibly England – where the Presbyterians had gained supremacy.⁹⁵

Christ's mediation was essentially prophetic, Hobbes insisted. More specifically, it was of a pedagogic nature; and after Christ's

death it was left to civil sovereigns to mediate between God and men in unitary commonwealths where Church and State were placed under their exclusive authority. In fact, that was already the case before Christ's first coming, in the kingdom of the Israelites. For the source of authority for the Old Testament prophets was not their privileged supernatural revelations but rather their exercise of civil sovereignty. Hobbes makes this point in his discussion of God's covenant with Abraham, early in Hebrew history:

In this contract of God with Abraham we may observe three points of important consequence in the government of God's people. First, that at the making of this covenant God spake only to Abraham, and therefore contracted not with any of his family or seed, otherwise than as their wills (which make the essence of all covenants) were before the contract involved in the will of Abraham, who was therefore supposed to have had a lawful power to make them perform all that he covenanted for them.⁹⁶

This lesson was further illustrated by the story of Moses who, like his successors, had the power to make God's commands 'to be law in the commonwealth of Israel' because he, 'and Aaron, and the succeeding priests were the civil sovereigns'.⁹⁷ Moses occupied the position of a 'prince', and his authority, 'as the authority of all other princes, must be grounded on the consent of the people and their promise to obey him', also in religious matters.⁹⁸ Christ, who could only teach and preach and took care not to meddle in government, had therefore much more limited power than even the great prophets of Israel. Deprived of any means of coercion, Christ bequeathed to his apostles and disciples who were to found his Church, only the power of 'persuasion', while 'lawful authority' he rightfully left 'to all princes, as well Christians as infidels'.⁹⁹ Hobbes's mediation theory, logically inseparable from his covenant theology, made a 'consolidation of the right politic and ecclesiastic in Christian sovereigns', imperative, thus strengthening his case for the unification of Church and State under their authority, because

they have all manner of power over their subjects that can be given to man for the government of men's external actions, both in policy and religion, and may make such laws as themselves shall judge fittest for the government of their own subjects, both as they are the commonwealth and as they are the Church; for both State and Church are the same men.¹⁰⁰

8. CONCLUSION

The hermeneutic of the covenant theologians was meant to facilitate conversion to the Christian faith, but Hobbes's understanding of the covenant with God involved a whole set of heterodox religious views that it both brought to light, and disguised under a thin veil of superficially orthodox statements. Not only was covenant theology as he employed it consistent with his political theory, but it also completed it, exhibiting the same formal structure as his social contract doctrine. Did covenanting belong to the theological foundation of politics, however, or was it just a mask for a basically antireligious philosophy? Strauss's analysis of Hobbes's critique of religion as the veiled expression of a radical version of Enlightenment ideology would suggest the latter. Using transparently socinian doctrines – about Christ, the Trinity, the mortality of the soul or the final destruction of the reprobate – Strauss sees Hobbes conveying in a mild, although scandalous enough way, a thorough rejection of Christianity and any kind of revealed religion at large.¹⁰¹ The brilliance of that reading also invites our caution. Although exceptionally perceptive, it tends to transform a legitimate suspicion into an insufficiently grounded certainty. The upshot seems to be that, because Revelation was not a necessary hypothesis in his system, Hobbes did not believe in it, which is not sound logic; and that because the *idea* of Revelation could be put to dangerous political uses, he rejected it unreservedly (again a hazardous form of reasoning). If the study of Hobbesian covenant theology confirms that *Leviathan* contains a number of idiosyncratic concepts, it certainly also heightens our conviction that the most salient feature of Hobbes's theology is its political dimension.

NOTES

1. Leo Strauss, 'Die religionskritik des Hobbes', *Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd. III, hrsg. v. Heinrich und Wiebke Meier (Weimar/Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler Verlag, 2001), 262–369. The French translation is by Corine Pelluchon, *La critique de la religion chez Hobbes. Une contribution à la compréhension des Lumières (1933–1934)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2005). This belated publication is a sign of the evolution in the previously mentioned reinterpretation of Hobbes's theology.

2. My remarks principally concern three commentaries dealing directly with Hobbes's relation to covenant theology: Luc Foisneau's, *Hobbes et la toute-puissance de Dieu*, chapter IX, 'Le droit à l'interprétation' (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2000), 333–58; Edwin Curley's 'The Covenant with God in Hobbes's *Leviathan*', in *Leviathan After 350 Years*, Tom Sorell and Luc Foisneau eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 199–216; and A. P. Martinich's, 'The Interpretation of Covenants in *Leviathan*', in *ibid.*, 217–40, as well as his *The Two Gods of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Religion and Politics*, chapters 5 and 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 136–82.
3. The major relevant passages in Scripture are: Gen. 2:16–7, 6:18, 9:9, 15 and 17; Exod. 19 and 20; Deut. 30; 2 Sam. 7; Jer. 31:31–4; Mat. 26:28; Luke 22:20; Rom. 5:12–21; 1 Cor. 9:25, 15:21, 15:45–9; Gal. 3 and 4; Heb. 9:15–28; Acts 2:30. But many other passages could be cited in support of a covenantal interpretation of Scripture.
4. See in particular Augustine's *City of God*, Bk XVI, ch. 27.
5. *The Summa Theologica*, 3rd Pt, q. 46, art. 4. Benziger Bros. edition, 1947. Translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Text from the Internet at the site: <http://www.ccel.org/a/aquinas/summa/>.
6. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1997 edition, §128. Text from the Internet at the site: <http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc.htm>.
7. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536), trans. Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1845), Bk II, ch. 10, §4. Text from the Internet at the site: <http://www.bible.org/docs/history/calvin/institut/httoc.htm>.
8. Calvin, *Institutes*, Bk II, ch. 10, §20.
9. Calvin, *Institutes*, Bk II, ch. 11, §7–8.
10. Canons of Dort, main point II ('Christ's death and human redemption'), 'Rejection of errors', §II. Text from the Internet at the site: <http://www.reformed.org/documents/index.html>.
11. Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man: Comprehending a Complete Body of Divinity*, trans. William Crookshank (London, 3 vols., 1763), Bk I, ch. 1, §10. Text (from the two-volume 1822 edition) from the Internet at the site: http://federaltheology.org/witsius_book_Title.htm.
12. Witsius, *Economy of the Covenants*, Bk I, ch. 1, §15.
13. Witsius, *Economy of the Covenants*, Bk III, ch. 3, §2.
14. Witsius, *Economy of the Covenants*, Bk I, ch. 1, §15.
15. Witsius, *Economy of the Covenants*, Bk III, ch. 3, §17.
16. Witsius, *Economy of the Covenants*, Bk III, ch. 1, §4.
17. Arminius, Oration IV, 'The Priesthood of Christ' (1603). Vol. 1 of *The Works of James Arminius*, 3 vols. (London/New York, Longman & Co.

1853), trans. James Nichols. Document available at the Wesley Center Online (Wesley Center for Applied Theology), at the site: <http://wesley.nnu.edu/arminianism/arminius/index.htm>.

18. *Lev.*, xxxv, 2, 216–17/272. (I have used Edwin Curley's edition of *Leviathan* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2004), the first number referring to the chapter, the second to the paragraph, the third (usually with two hyphenated figures) to the Head pagination as given by Curley, the fourth (after a slash) to Curley's pagination. All italics are from that edition.
19. *Lev.*, xxxi, 4, 343–6/235.
20. *Lev.*, xxxi, 2, 186–7/234.
21. *Lev.*, xxxv, 4, 396–9/273.
22. *Lev.*, xxxv, 13, 219–20/276.
23. *Lev.*, xli, 4, 477–80/329.
24. *Lev.*, xxxvii, 6, 428–31/295.
25. *Lev.*, xli, 5, 263–5/320.
26. *Lev.*, xliv, 24, 621–4/425.
27. *Lev.*, xli, 2, 474–7/327 and 262–3/327.
28. *Lev.*, xli, 7, 480–3/331.
29. *Lev.*, xli, 7, 480–3/331.
30. *Lev.*, xli, 8, 265–7/332.
31. *Lev.*, xli, 8, 265–7/332.
32. *Lev.*, xli, 8, 265–7/332. See also, on the same subject, *Lev.*, xxxv, 19.
33. On this particular point, see the statement: 'if by righteousness be understood the justice of the works themselves, there is no man that can be saved, for there is none that hath not transgressed the law of God' (*Lev.*, xliii, 20, 329–30/408).
34. *Lev.*, xliv, 24, 621–4/425.
35. See, for instance, *Lev.*, xxxv, 1; xxxv, 13; xlii, 16; xliv, 4; xlvii, 2.
36. See Curley, 'The Covenant with God in *Leviathan*'.
37. The last two views are endorsed by Martinich, although he argues that Hobbes's doctrine betrays the obvious influence of covenant theologians. See *The Two Gods of Leviathan*, chapter 6, 'Sovereign-Making Covenants', 161–82.
38. Witsius, *Economy of the Covenants*, Bk I, ch. 1, §XI.
39. Witsius, *Economy of the Covenants*, Bk I, ch. 1, §XI.
40. Witsius, *Economy of the Covenants*, Bk I, ch. 1, §XI.
41. Witsius, *Economy of the Covenants*, Bk I, ch. 1, §XI.
42. Witsius, *Economy of the Covenants*, Bk I, ch. 1, §XIII.
43. Witsius, *Economy of the Covenants*, Bk I, ch. 1, §XIII.
44. Witsius, *Economy of the Covenants*, Bk I, ch. 1, §XIII.
45. Witsius, *Economy of the Covenants*, Bk I, ch. 1, §XIV.

46. Witsius, *Economy of the Covenants*, Bk I, ch. 1, §XIV.
47. A. P. Martinich, 'The Interpretation of Covenants in *Leviathan*', 238–9.
48. I use the adjective 'sacred' for lack of a more accurate one to designate the covenant between God and man.
49. See the passage quoted above: 'I find the KINGDOM OF GOD to signify, in most places of Scripture, a *kingdom properly so named*, constituted by the votes of the people of Israel in peculiar manner, wherein they chose God for their king by covenant made with him, upon God's promising them the possession of the land of Canaan, and but seldom metaphorically' (*Lev.*, xxxv, 2, 216–17/272).
50. This view is endorsed by Martinich in his otherwise critical analysis of Curley's article, 'The Interpretation of Covenants in *Leviathan*', 229.
51. *Lev.*, xvii, 15, 88–9/110.
52. *Lev.*, xviii, 4.
53. *Lev.*, xx, 1, 182–5/127.
54. *Lev.*, xx, 1, 182–5/127.
55. *Lev.*, xx, 10, 103–5/130.
56. *Lev.*, xx, 11, 188–91/131.
57. *Lev.*, xx, 3, 102–3/128.
58. *Lev.*, xxx, 10, 326–9/223.
59. See Luc Foisneau, *Hobbes et la toute-puissance de Dieu*, chapter IX, 'Le droit à l'interprétation', 333–58.
60. *Lev.*, xiv, 23, 123–6/85.
61. *Lev.*, xviii, 3, 159–61/111.
62. A. P. Martinich, 'The Interpretation of Covenants in *Leviathan*', 233–4; see also his *The Two Gods of Leviathan*, chapter 5, 'The History and Idea of Covenants', 136–60. The 'Solemn League and Covenant' of 1643 is a typical document.
63. This commentary applies evidently to the Judeo-Christian covenant, which is that alluded to in the passage cited: puritan opponents to the royal government are the barely veiled target of Hobbes's attack.
64. *Lev.*, xxix, 7, 168–70/212.
65. *Lev.*, xxxiii, 1, 198–200/250.
66. *Lev.*, xviii, 3, 159–61/111.
67. The use of a capital M is deliberate in the case of Christ. That is the custom of all Christian theologians.
68. *Lev.*, xxxii, 6, 360–2/247. One powerful reason why any such obligation would be unthinkable is that, in most cases, so-called prophets aim at nothing but power and domination: see *Lev.*, xxxvi, 19.
69. *Lev.*, xxxvi, 11, 227–8/286.
70. See Deut. 13:1–5 and Matt. 24:24.
71. *Lev.*, xxxii, 8–9.

72. *Lev.*, xliii, 6, 322–4/400.
73. 'How God speaketh to a man immediately may be understood by those well enough to whom he hath so spoken; but how the same should be understood by another is hard, if not impossible, to know' (*Lev.*, xxxii, 5, 195–7/246). This applies to biblical prophets, from Abraham down to Moses: 'in what manner God spake to those sovereign prophets of the Old Testament, whose office it was to enquire of Him [as it is not declared, so also it] is not intelligible' (*Lev.*, xxxvi, 14, 229–30/288).
74. *Lev.*, xliii, 7, 322–4/400.
75. '[T]he faith of Christians ever since our Saviour's time hath had for foundation, first, the reputation of their pastors, and afterward, the authority of those that made the Old and New Testament to be received for the rule of faith – which none could do but Christian sovereigns' (*Lev.*, xliii, 6, 322–4/400).
76. *Lev.*, xliii, 6, 322–4/400.
77. *Lev.*, xxxvi, 20, 425–8/293.
78. On the Catholic doctrine of the Mediator, see Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, 3rd Pt, q. 26, art. 1–2, 'Of Christ as called the Mediator of God and man'; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §480 and 1544; *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, art. 'Mediator' (by J. Wilhelm, trans. J. P. Thomas, vol. X, 1911), available on the Internet at the site: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/>.
79. Calvin, *Institutes*, Bk II, ch. 10, §23.
80. Calvin, *Institutes*, Bk II, ch. 15, §3.
81. See Calvin, *Institutes*, ch. VIII, §6.
82. Calvin *Institutes*, Bk II, ch. 12, §3).
83. *The Summa Theologica*, 3rd Pt, q. 26, art. 2, reply to objection 3.
84. On the subject of Hobbes's christology, a topic too large and complex to be treated here, see Franck Lessay, 'Hobbes: une christologie politique?', *New Critical Perspectives on Hobbes's Leviathan Upon the 350th Anniversary of Its Publication*, Luc Foisneau and George Wright eds. (Milan: Franco Angeli, Collana di filosofia, 2004), 51–72.
85. *Lev.*, xli, 3, 262–3/328.
86. *Lev.*, xli, 6, 480–3/331.
87. *Lev.*, xli, 3, 262–3/328.
88. *Lev.*, xxxviii, 24, 454–7/313.
89. *Lev.*, xli, 4, 477–80/329.
90. In fact, the whole Latin Appendix, published in English in Edwin Curley's edition of *Leviathan*, is a reply to the accusations of heresy levelled against Hobbes. As concerns the specific charge of arianism, see chapter I of the Appendix ('On the Nicene Creed') and chapter III ('On certain objections against *Leviathan*'), §11–4.

91. *Lev.*, xli, 7, 480–3/331.
92. *Lev.*, xli, 9, 483–6/333.
93. *Lev.*, xlii, 3, 267–9/334. On the subject of Hobbes's trinitarian views, besides the article already mentioned on his christology, see George Wright, 'Hobbes and the Economic Trinity', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 7 (3), 1999, 397–428.
94. See the whole of chapter xlii, which in many ways is an extensive controversy with Cardinal Bellarmine over the foundations and nature of ecclesiastical power. The connection between trinitarian doctrine and ecclesiology appears clearly in §1–10. It should be noted that Hobbes's attack against Rome applied to the Church of England as well, whose Laudian tendency, in particular, grounded the defence of its independence from the temporal power on a claim of continuity with the Church of the origins and, thereby, on its divine institution. The controversy between Hobbes and Bishop Bramhall also bore on that point. See also *An Answer to a Book Entitled The Capture of Leviathan* (*EW*, IV).
95. *Lev.*, xlvii, 4. The Calvinist exponent of this theory selected for attack by Hobbes is Beza. See *Lev.*, xlv, 17–18.
96. *Lev.*, xl, 2, 459–62/317.
97. *Lev.*, xlii, 37, 282–4/352.
98. *Lev.*, xl, 6, 462–65/319.
99. *Lev.*, xlii, 10, 489–92/337.
100. *Lev.*, xlii, 79, 299–300/372.
101. See Leo Strauss, 'Die religionskritik des Hobbes' (in French, *La critique de la religion chez Hobbes. Une contribution à la compréhension des Lumières* (1933–1934).

11 Omnipotence, Necessity and Sovereignty

Hobbes and the Absolute and Ordinary Powers of God and King

In his interpretation of the biblical theme of divine royalty, Hobbes assigns a key role to the concept of omnipotence. Basing his argument on two texts from Psalms which state that ‘God is king’,¹ he specifically asserts that, ‘Whether men will or not, they *must be* subject always to the divine power’.² The link between omnipotence and necessity, alluded to here, is nevertheless to be distinguished from the proper meaning of kingdom, for it is by way of metaphor only that some have called this ‘power of God (which extendeth itself not only to man, but also to beasts, and plants, and bodies inanimate) by the name of kingdom’.³ In the strict sense of the term, kingdom describes government by one alone, by means of speech, and upheld by punishments and rewards. The subjects of this kingdom are those ‘that believe that there is a God that governeth the world’⁴ – which excludes atheists – and those that believe that God ‘hath given precepts, and propounded rewards and punishments to mankind’⁵ – which excludes Epicureans. Indirect as it is, the common reference to divine omnipotence and necessity of actions clearly points to the fact that, in the cosmo-theological order, divine omnipotence circumscribes men’s actions in the network of causal series, which is itself governed by the principle of necessity. Although Hobbes does not refer to necessity, but to the *irresistible* power of God, when he introduces the concept of a kingdom of God by nature in chapter xxxi of *Leviathan*, it is possible to show that his conception of

I wish to thank Richard J. Fletcher who assisted with the translation of the original version of this essay, which has undergone a great deal of subsequent revision.

necessity is strongly connected to the classical distinction between the absolute and ordinary powers of God. It should also be noted that the right by which God has men obey him in his natural kingdom is understood as the right of the stronger explicitly derived from his divine omnipotence:

Seeing all men by nature had right to all things, they had right every one to reign over all the rest. . . . To those, therefore, whose power is irresistible, the dominion of all men adhereth naturally by their excellence of power; and consequently it is from that power that the kingdom over men, and the right of afflicting men at his pleasure, belongeth naturally to God Almighty, not as Creator and gracious, but as omnipotent.⁶

The very same axiom, that an irresistible power establishes a natural right to dominate, thus holds true in political anthropology as in political theology. However, although it is easy to understand in the abstract that a natural right may be conceived of along similar lines to the right of the stronger, it is harder to understand how this notion is consistent with the concept of divine right, and the tissue of distinctions around which Christian theological thinking on divine power has developed.

To overcome such difficulties we need both to explore the theological meaning of the theory of necessity and to take into account the views of Hobbes's contemporaries who were familiar with the classical distinctions regarding divine omnipotence in order to provide some reference points in constructing an interpretation of Hobbes's idea of God's irresistible power. I will confine myself for the most part to the judgements of John Bramhall, who engaged in a lengthy debate with Hobbes on the issue of liberty and necessity and will investigate particularly his criticism of the 'tyranny' of Hobbes's God. Of Hobbes's understanding of 'tyrant', readers tend to remember only that it means the same as the word 'king', and that it is used by those whose intention is to criticise a monarch:

And because the name of tyranny signifies nothing more nor less than the name of sovereignty (be it in one or many men), saving that they that use the former word are understood to be angry with them they call tyrants, I think the toleration of a professed hatred of tyranny is a toleration of hatred to commonwealth in general.⁷

This chapter sets out to show that the issue of God's tyranny extends far beyond a mere argument about words. By shedding light

on the moral and political status of irresistible power in the seventeenth century, it provides a reference point in situating Hobbes's theory on the kingdom of God by nature in the long history of the theology of omnipotence. The first part of the essay highlights the link in Bramhall's thinking between the tyranny of Hobbes's God, Hobbes's necessitarianism and the 'destruction' of divine attributes. In the second part, I show that this criticism enables us to interpret Hobbes's theory of divine omnipotence by calling into question the traditional opposition between God's ordinary and absolute powers. Finally, I explore the nature and scope of the analogy between political sovereignty and the irresistible power of God.

I. NECESSITY AND THE ABSOLUTE POWER OF GOD

In order to understand the serious accusation that Bramhall levels at Hobbes's concept of God, let us begin with the argument used by Hobbes to destroy the notion of a free agent. In applying the principle, which he has previously demonstrated, that necessary cause and sufficient cause are identical,⁸ Hobbes sets out the following argument: 'For if it be an agent, it can work; and if it work, there is nothing wanting of what is requisite to produce the action; and consequently the cause of the action is sufficient; and if sufficient, then also necessary, as hath been proved before'.⁹ This argument shows that the sufficient cause of any action is in fact the necessary cause. Given Hobbes's stipulation: a 'sufficient cause [being that], to which nothing is wanting that is needful to the producing of the effect', it follows that 'if it be impossible that a sufficient cause should not produce the effect, then is a sufficient cause a necessary cause'.¹⁰ Bramhall wisely draws the theological conclusions of this demonstration: 'The last link of his argument follows: "and if sufficient, then also necessary". Stay there; by his leave, there is no necessary connexion between sufficiency and efficiency; otherwise God himself should not be all-sufficient'.¹¹ Bramhall is right that if Hobbes's argument holds true for an agent in general, there is nothing to stop it from being applied to God, who is the foremost of all agents. Moreover, such an application implies, as Bramhall points out, that the principle according to which God chooses what is to be created – in other words, the principle of sufficient reason – is none other than a principle of necessity, or, put differently, of efficiency. One might have expected a vehement protest from Hobbes, accompanied by an

apology for divine liberty. Should prudence not have taught him to dissociate the case of God from the case of man? But not only does he not see Bramhall's objection, he even goes so far as to interpret the sufficiency of God as proper efficiency (i.e., the power to do what He wills):

All-sufficiency signifieth no more, when it is attributed to God, than omnipotence; and omnipotence signifieth no more, than the power to do all things that he will. But to the production of any thing that is produced, the will of God is as requisite as the rest of his power and sufficiency. And consequently, his all-sufficiency signifieth not a sufficiency or power to do those things he will not.¹²

This text makes three assertions and draws one conclusion. The first assertion clearly indicates that sufficient reason is equal to omnipotence; the second defines omnipotence as the power to do everything one wills, and the third stresses that there is no omnipotence without the involvement of will. The final sentence is unequivocal: there are no grounds for granting God the power to do things that he does not wish to do. This last sentence, which could easily pass unremarked, is important because it succeeds in eliding the traditional distinction between the absolute power of God (*potentia absoluta Dei*), and the ordinate or ordinary power of God (*potentia ordinata Dei*), taken to mean that God has the power to do what he does not do, in other words what he does not want to do.¹³ However, interpreting this elision is problematic. For, even though the definition that Hobbes gives of omnipotence constitutes an undeniable rejection of the distinction between ordinary power and absolute power, his definition does not simply entail a return to the position predating the invention of this distinction – to the position of Abelard, for example, who states that God can do only what he does.¹⁴ Hobbes effects a radical transformation of the distinction between absolute power and ordinary power, which is at the same time a transformation of the distinction between power and will. Instead of rigorously submitting *divine power* to the *will of God*, as his medieval forerunners had done, he appears to do the reverse and submit *divine will* to the *power of God*, which is equivalent to defending the doctrine of absolute necessity.

What this means can best be understood on the basis of the distinction between absolute and hypothetical necessity. Despite repeated

calls by Bramhall, Hobbes refuses to recognise that the necessity he has demonstrated in *Of Liberty and Necessity* would be only a hypothetical necessity. Saying that the necessity of all things is only a hypothetical necessity amounts to saying that it is subject to a condition – if a given cause is present, a given effect will necessarily be produced – and, ultimately, to the condition of divine choice at the moment of creation. In rejecting Bramhall's interpretation, Hobbes also refuses to consider necessity as being subject to the condition of *good* divine will. It thus follows that the necessary order of things is a product of divine will only insofar as it derives from the omnipotence of God. Commentators generally agree with Bramhall, whose view here is shared by Leibniz,¹⁵ in invalidating Hobbes's claim. In the final analysis, Hobbes has succeeded in proving a hypothetical necessity and not, as he claims, an absolute necessity. There is nothing too novel about this criticism, which is fully in line with the spirit of Christian theology. What is surprising however is Hobbes's belief that it is possible to reconcile divine will, omnipotence and absolute necessity.

In order to gauge the unique nature of his theory, one need only recall what Saint Anselm says, in *Cur Deus Homo*, about the subordination of power to will: 'All capability is consequent upon will. For when I say, "I am capable of speaking" or "walking", it is implied, "If it is my will". If will, then, is not implicit, what is being referred to is not capability but inevitability (*necessitas*)'.¹⁶ Evidently, Hobbes does not share Anselm's view, given that he claims God's will is compatible with absolute necessity. Rather taking the opposite view, he appears to consider that everything that exists has to be the *necessary* product of God's *power*, and that God *wants* what he has the power to do. If this is the case – but how it can be the case is difficult to understand – one must agree with Hobbes that what exists is as much the expression of God's power as it is of his will.

In Bramhall's view a twofold difficulty emerges from this definition of God's will. First, it implies a rather unorthodox understanding of the classical principle that 'the will of God is the rule of justice',¹⁷ meaning on Bramhall's reading of Hobbes that 'by willing things in themselves unjust, he did render them just by reason of his absolute dominion and irresistible power'.¹⁸ In order to understand the significance of this statement it is worth stressing the difference between stating, as Anselm does, that 'the will of man is good, and just, and

right, when he wills that which God would have him to will',¹⁹ and stating, as Bramhall has Hobbes say, that 'every man always wills that which God would have him to will'.²⁰ Hobbes's necessitarianism on this reading would make pointless the 'Our Father' and, more generally, all form of prayer. For what is the point of asking God for his 'will to be done on earth as it is in heaven' if one believes that divine will is achieved perfectly on earth through the will of men? Not without irony, the Bishop comments, 'Thomas Hobbes hath devised a new kind of heaven upon earth', but this heaven is 'without justice'.²¹ Second, Hobbes's definition of God's will ultimately reduces all divine attributes to omnipotence alone; for as soon as goodness is defined as 'the power to make himself beloved',²² and justice for God as 'the power he hath, and exerciseth in distributing blessings and afflictions',²³ goodness and justice become subsumed in the attribute of power. As such, this operation is not as scandalous as it might at first appear. After all, it is foreshadowed in the *Stromateis* of Clement of Alexandria.²⁴ The difficulty resides in the corollary that Bramhall deduces from Hobbes's theory. In turning the various divine attributes into mere vehicles for omnipotence, Hobbes proceeds to destroy the very meaning of those attributes, thereby transforming the royalty of God into true tyranny. In not allowing that God governs men according to his truth, his goodness and his justice, but according to a will that can only be limited by his own power, Hobbes transforms God into a tyrant. As Bramhall charges: 'That his opinion destroyeth the justice of God is so plain that it admitteth no defence'. Bramhall's criticism is unambiguous, as the repeated use of the verb 'to destroy' indicates:²⁵ the systematic destruction of the theology of divine attributes amounts to no less than turning God into a tyrant.

By identifying divine power with divine will as well as affirming an absolute necessity, Hobbes also destroys the kingdom of God by nature, in Bramhall's view. In effect, such a God could appear in the eyes of the men that he governs as possessed of two contradictory wills, since he commands them to act in accordance with the word of his revelation, while at the same time forcing them to follow the inescapable and predetermined path of necessity. As Bramhall states, 'to command one thing openly, and to necessitate another thing privately, destroyeth the truth of God, the goodness of God, the justice of God and the power of God'.²⁶ The scope of this criticism rests

entirely on the classical distinction between two accepted views of the will of God, one of which employs 'will' in a metaphorical sense, and the other in a literal or 'proper' sense. What Bramhall calls the public commandment of God actually corresponds to what Thomas Aquinas calls God's indications concerning his will, or the will of sign (*voluntas signi*); while what he calls the secret will of God corresponds to what Aquinas refers to as the will of God's good pleasure (*voluntas beneplaciti*). Aquinas clarifies the distinction that he draws as follows:

In the same way, what is usually with us an expression of will is sometimes metaphorically called will in God; just as when anyone lays down a precept, it is a sign that he wishes that precept obeyed. Hence a divine precept is sometimes called by metaphor the will of God, as in the words: *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven* (Matt. vi, 10). . . . Therefore in God there are distinguished will in its proper sense and will as attributed to Him by metaphor. Will in its proper sense is called the will of good pleasure, and will metaphorically taken is the will of sign, inasmuch as the sign itself of will is called will.²⁷

This distinction was widely used by protestant theologians, and Hobbes himself gives a precise definition of it. At the beginning of *Questions*, he thus states that 'the Word and Commandment of God, namely, the holy Scripture, is usually called by Christians God's will, but his revealed will; acknowledging the very will of God, which they call his counsel and decree, to be another thing'.²⁸ So, the difference of opinion between Hobbes and Bramhall has less to do with how one interprets the distinction between the indications of will, or 'will of sign' and 'the will of good pleasure', and more to do with how it is applied to the issue of divine attributes.

Hobbes's threefold denial of divine truth, goodness and justice, according to Bramhall, goes so far as to undermine omnipotence itself, for, by making God the author of sin and all faults that are the 'fruits of impotence, not of power',²⁹ Hobbes ends up destroying the very foundation of divine power: '[Necessity] destroyeth the very power of God, making him to be the true author of all the defects and evils which are in the world. These are the fruits of impotence, not of omnipotence. He who is the effective cause of sin, either in himself or in the creature, is not almighty'.³⁰ Recalling Saint Augustine's comment on *Genesis XIX* 22, on God who, despite having the

power to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah for as long as Lot is there, refrains from doing so in the interests of justice,³¹ Bramhall argues that, since the power of Hobbes's God is a power to do evil, it is in effect a form of impotence. The denial of divine beneficence makes this tyranny even more terrible in that it turns God into a purely evil power. In thinking that he was doing away with the devil, Hobbes has put 'God allmighty in his place', Bramhall declares.³² And in a way, his divine tyrant is worse than the God of Simon Magus,³³ since the latter restricted himself to blaming God for not having freed man of sin.

Powerful though this criticism of Hobbes's description of the tyranny of God may be, it is not the end of the story. Bramhall goes on to argue that, while the denial of God's beneficence does indeed constitute the central feature of his criticism, it has another feature too, which is less apparent but just as important to our argument. For, Bramhall shows that the transformation of God into a tyrant presupposes the abandonment by Hobbes of the classical definition of the ordinary power of God (*potential ordinata Dei*), built on the idea that a subject can impose an obligation upon himself.

2. OBLIGATION AND THE ORDINARY POWER OF GOD

Although Bramhall is quick to say that Hobbes makes bad use of *de potentia Dei* arguments, and even goes so far as to claim that he 'shooteth at random',³⁴ one is right in thinking that the Hobbesian reworking of the concept of the power of God is less naive than it might at first appear. Hobbes steadfastly targets the concept of ordinary or ordinate power (*potentia ordinata*) and tries to show that this concept rests on an error of principle. The distinction between *potentia absoluta* and *potentia ordinata*, which slots easily into Anglican theology, is one that is familiar to Bramhall, who reminds Hobbes of its principal feature: 'Nothing is impossible to God's absolute power; but according to His ordinate power, which is disposed by His will, He cannot change His own decrees, nor go from His promise'.³⁵ Ordinary power rests on the obligation that God freely imposes on himself to respect the promises that he has made to men. The order established by divine will is thus not based on the irresistible nature of power at all, but on a commitment freely entered into, a promise or covenant that God made with himself in the act of creation before

making that covenant with men, which is called the covenant of works, when it is made with Adam, or the covenant of grace, when it is made by God with Abraham, or with other great Old Testament figures and with Jesus.³⁶

Anselm of Canterbury clearly laid the conceptual foundations of what others after him called the ordinary power of God. In order to grasp this dimension of divine power, he says, one has to agree to draw a distinction between two forms of necessity, on the one hand, a necessity that produces the effect through compulsion, and on the other hand, a necessity that produces the effect as a consequence of a free obligation imposed on oneself. Taken together with the distinctions between antecedent, consequent, permissive and operative will, which also play a significant part in the debate between Hobbes and Bramhall,³⁷ the distinction between that necessity which stems from compulsion and that which stems from obligation can only be fully grasped if the latter is seen in terms of an obligation that one freely imposes upon oneself. In order to understand this freely imposed obligation towards oneself, Anselm cites the model of the monastic vow:

A comparable case is when someone of his own free will makes a vow about holy living. It is true that he is of necessity under an obligation to keep the vow after he has made it, in order that he may not incur the condemnation due to an apostate; it is true, also, that he can be forced to keep it, supposing he does not wish to. But even so, if he keeps his vow willingly, he is not less, but more, pleasing to God than if he had not made the vow, since what he has renounced for the sake of God is not only life in ordinary society, but permission to participate in it.³⁸

While it is true that compulsion can force the apostate to honour his monastic vows, it is not compulsion that is the source of his commitment. This commitment originates from a free decision that is typified by the self-imposition of an order, in this case, to lead one's life according to a prescribed set of rules. By committing the future on the strength of a decision in the present, the vow establishes a contract between the individual and himself; it creates necessity on the basis of a free decision.

In the view of Anselm, with whom Bramhall agrees on this point, the necessity that governs the life of someone who has imposed such an obligation upon himself is thus radically different from the

necessity that compels on the basis of an external force. In applying the monastic vows model to the creator, Anselm states that, even though God is never compelled by necessity, he can nonetheless choose freely to impose an obligation upon himself for the sake of humanity. Although God is subject to necessity, this necessity is itself subordinate to a free decision. Anselm's distinction allows us to understand what Bramhall means when he states that according to his ordinary power God cannot break his promise: he is saying that ordinary power is subordinate to an obligation freely imposed by God upon himself. He thus counters Hobbes's absolute necessity with the hypothetical or conditional necessity that is traditionally associated with ordinary power.

Hobbes's theory of necessity actually goes hand in hand with a theory of obligation that dismisses the notion of an obligation towards oneself underlying the classical notion of ordinary power, as he argued in *De Cive*:³⁹

There are two kinds of natural obligation: one, where liberty is excluded by physical obstacles, as when we say that heaven and earth and all creatures obey the common laws of their creation. The other, where liberty is excluded by hope and fear, as when we say that a weaker man cannot disobey a stronger man whom he has no hope of being able to resist.

His criticism of an obligation towards oneself, which is set out in the passage of *Leviathan* that deals with how to interpret the *princeps legibus solutus* rule, is general in its scope: 'For he is free that can be free when he will; nor is it possible for any person to be bound to himself, because he that can bind can release; and therefore, he that is bound to himself only is not bound'.⁴⁰ This idea had already been expressed by Bodin:

If the sovereign prince is thus exempt from the laws of his predecessors, much less is he bound by laws and ordinances that he has made himself. For although one can receive law from someone else, it is as impossible by nature to give one's self a law as it is to command one's self to do something that depends on one's own will. As the law says, *Nulla obligatio consistere potest, quae a voluntate promittentis statum capit* [No obligation can exist that depends on the will of the person promising] – which is a rational necessity and clearly demonstrates that a king cannot be subject to the laws.⁴¹

Central to Bodin's theory of sovereignty, this criticism of the notion of an obligation towards oneself applies equally to God. The classical

idea that Bramhall alights on, that 'God may oblige himself freely to his creature', is as absurd in Hobbes's eyes as it is in Bodin's, given that 'he that can oblige, can also, when he will, release; and he that can release himself when he will, is not obliged'.⁴² In the same way that he rejects the idea of a free promise or vow, Hobbes also rejects the idea of an obligation freely imposed by God upon himself for the sake of his creatures. Given that to be obliged only towards oneself amounts to not being obliged at all, if God has made a commitment to himself alone, he is free of all obligation.

Hobbes's criticism of Bramhall involves two mutually entailed presuppositions: first, the absence of moral liberty and, second, a concept of obligation that identifies obligation with compulsion. The first point involves Hobbes in challenging the relevance of a distinction between moral liberty and natural liberty. For, men in his view are not capable of autonomy, so they are moved like animals by the threat of punishment and the hope of rewards. When Bramhall challenges him by saying that there is a difference in nature between what motivates the actions of animals and what motivates human action, Hobbes replies with a very explicit question: 'Do not men do their duty with regard to their backs, to their necks, and to their morsels, as well as setting-dogs, coy-ducks, and parrots?'⁴³ Human beings, according to Hobbes, are motivated by self-preservation, which functions as necessity and does not make room for autonomous action. On the second point, that Hobbes tends to conflate obligation and compulsion, Pufendorf accuses him of a category mistake: 'For compulsion and obligation are different'.⁴⁴ Insofar as natural obligation originates from the omnipotence of God,⁴⁵ the ultimate reason for the obligation resembles the reason of the stronger. While it is not wrong to hold that there is a difference between compulsion that 'can be produced by natural strength alone' and obligation that 'by no means'⁴⁶ could be the product of force, it is no less true that, in the case of obligation originating from divine power, this difference diminishes considerably. Natural, or rather moral, obligation is then no more than the reasoned internalisation of some sort of compulsion.

The order that God imposes on men under the rubric of morality is thus only the expression of his justice insofar as his justice is the expression of his power. When Hobbes says that 'the power of God alone, without other help, is sufficient justification of any action he doth',⁴⁷ he also goes on to add nevertheless that what men 'call by

the name of justice, and according whereunto men are counted and termed rightly just and unjust', in other words pacts and covenants, 'is not that by which God Almighty's actions are to be measured or called just'.⁴⁸ In effect, if God were forced to dispense his power according to pacts or covenants, he would probably be deemed impotent rather than omnipotent:

Besides this, [Bramhall] is driven to words ill-becoming him that is to speak of God Almighty; for he makes him unable to do that which hath been within the ordinary power of men to do. 'God', he saith, 'cannot destroy the righteous with the wicked'; which nevertheless is a thing ordinarily done by armies.⁴⁹

Even though the Bishop of Derry retorts that armies only momentarily suspend the exercise of ordinary justice, without ever claiming to take its place⁵⁰ – thereby implying that the exercise of absolute power does not challenge the existence of ordinary power – the force of Hobbes's criticism remains. Stripped of the concept of obligation towards oneself, the concept of *potentia ordinata Dei* loses its original meaning.

Contractualist political theory, at least as conceived of by Hobbes, goes hand in hand with a transformation of the theological understanding of covenant. It is as if to build the power of the State on a social contract, it was necessary to deny that God's power could be defined in terms of a free obligation towards oneself. Since Hobbes's God is not compelled by anyone, he cannot actually have an obligation towards anyone, not even towards himself. Because he is not capable of such an obligation, he can no longer be understood according to the category of ordinary power. So Hobbes's understanding of political order in terms of contract is predicated on the denial of the natural and moral order as the expression of an obligation God imposes upon himself, that is to say, as the effect of a covenant between God and himself.

3. BEYOND THE ABSOLUTE AND ORDINARY POWERS OF GOD AND KING

The analogy between the theological model of irresistible power and the political model of absolute sovereignty echoes the argument made at the end of the thirteenth century by canonists eager to justify the absolute power (*plenitudo potestatis*) of the Pope while at the

same time maintaining the fundamental laws of the Church (*status ecclesiae*).⁵¹ But the distinction between absolute and ordinary power invoked on this occasion to explain that, while the Pope was not bound by the Church's laws *de potentia absoluta*, he obliged himself to respect them *de potentia ordinata*, is rejected by Hobbes, both for political and theological reasons. At the heart of this rejection is nothing less than the fundamental theologico-political positioning of Hobbes's political thought, and the fact that he distanced himself irrevocably from the political theology of James I.⁵² For though King James was able to bring the opposition between ordinary power and absolute power into play to justify both his prerogative and the fact that he freely submitted to his own law, Hobbes does not predicate the same of the sovereign of *Leviathan*.

Reading *De Cive*, Bramhall was struck by a political analogy between Hobbes's politics and theology – and his remarks would apply equally to *Leviathan*. Before launching into the debate about necessity the Bishop of Derry had actually planned to submit sixty objections concerning *De Cive* to Hobbes.⁵³ These objections – probably lost – were drawn up on the basis of the first version of the work, published in 1642,⁵⁴ which raises the possibility that Bramhall may have been responsible for some of the remarks (*annotationes*) added by Hobbes to the second edition of *De Cive*.⁵⁵ The debate on necessity appears to be the extension on the level of logic and theology of a juridico-political exploration of the status of the absolute power of the sovereign. One should not be surprised therefore that Bramhall thought it wise to bring together the theology of omnipotence and the political theory of *De Cive*. Having reaffirmed that 'God may oblige himself freely to his creature' and that 'divine justice is not measured by omnipotence or by irresistible power, but by God's will',⁵⁶ the Bishop states that the 'same privilege which T. H. appropriates here to power absolutely irresistible, a friend of his, in his book *De Cive*, chapter VI, ascribes to power respectively irresistible, or to sovereign magistrates, whose power he makes to be as absolute as a man's power is over himself; not to be limited by any thing, but only by their strength'.⁵⁷ Hobbes does indeed state in *De Cive* that the sovereign has 'by right as much power over individual citizens...as each man has over himself outside of the commonwealth' and that this power 'is to be limited only by the strength of the commonwealth and not by anything else'.⁵⁸ But he does not say that the sovereign's right is based on absolute power, as God's right is, and further, he

firmly rejects the idea that his theory would imply that all things are just 'that are done by them who have power enough to avoid the punishment'.⁵⁹ Such a conclusion would, indeed, be contrary to his refutation of the fool who says in his heart 'there is no such thing as justice'.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, Bramhall reiterates his position in his reply, suggesting that Hobbes has changed his mind between *De Cive* and *The Questions*: 'But whereas he doth *now* restrain this privilege to that power alone which is absolutely irresistible, he forgetteth himself over much, having formerly extended it to all sovereigns and supreme councils, within their own dominions'.⁶¹

It is clear that the argument proving that the holder of divine power is not limited by anyone else's power cannot be directly applied to a human sovereign.⁶² The argument that if two omnipotent beings were to exist neither one would have to obey the other⁶³ is obviously no argument against the plurality of states. This slotting together of arguments is thus not enough to demonstrate that Hobbes's political and theological theories complement one another. Indeed, Bramhall's criticism is itself built on a specific political theology: 'The greatest propugners of sovereign power think it enough for princes to challenge an immunity from coercive power, but acknowledge that the law hath a directive power over them'.⁶⁴ Such was notably the position of James I, a great defender of sovereign power who nevertheless recognised the directive power of the law insofar as he had committed himself to abide by it. In the same way as the ordinary power of God presupposes that God can impose an obligation on himself, the directive power of the law presupposes that the king can abide by his own law.

Hobbes's position breaks with this political theology in two ways. First, it makes a new departure in maintaining that the contract which establishes the body politic cannot be seen as constituting an obligation by the sovereign towards himself or his people. Rather it is seen as freeing the sovereignty from any prior covenant,⁶⁵ thereby conferring on him a power beyond comparison with that of the individuals and social groups that are his subjects. Second, Hobbes's position deviates from Jacobean political theology in supplying a theological model for the power of the state that radically subverts the distinction between the ordinate (or ordinary) powers and the absolute power of God. Bramhall espied Hobbes's God behind the mask of the tyrant because he exaggerates the ramifications of

Hobbes's position. But it is true to say that the God of *Leviathan* presupposes denial of the possibility of obligation towards oneself and, implicitly therefore, abandonment of the promise made to men in the kingdom of God by nature. But to see this abandonment as leading to the tyranny of the State is undoubtedly to draw too hasty a conclusion, given that *Leviathan's* omnipotent God functions exclusively as the *theological* condition of the *legal* sovereignty of the modern State.

NOTES

1. *Lev.*, xxxi, 2, 186/234; see *De Cive*, XV, 2, 222/172. The first page number given in the references to *Leviathan* refers to *Leviathan with selected variants from the Latin edition of 1668*, ed. E. Curley (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994), while the second refers to the original English version of 1651. For *De Cive*, the text quoted is H. Warrender's edition, *De Cive, The Latin Version* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), and the translation is by R. Tuck and M. Silverthorne, *On the Citizen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) unless otherwise indicated. In both cases, Roman numerals indicate chapters and the Arabic numerals, subparagraphs or articles in the original edition.
2. *Lev.*, xxxi, 2, 186/234. Italics are mine.
3. *Lev.*, xxxi, 2, 186/234.
4. *Lev.*, xxxi, 2, 186/234.
5. *Lev.*, xxxi, 2, 186/234.
6. *Lev.*, xxxi, 5, 187/236.
7. *Lev.*, A Review and Conclusion, 9, 392/492.
8. Hobbes, *Of Liberty and Necessity*, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, ed. W. Molesworth (London: J. Bohn, 1839–45), vol. 4, [229–78], 274–5. Published in London in 1654 without Hobbes's permission, *Of Liberty and Necessity* is the first part of the debate with Bramhall.
9. Hobbes, *Liberty and Necessity*, 278.
10. Hobbes, *Liberty and Necessity*, 274. The reference to those texts can also be given in Hobbes, *The Questions concerning Liberty, Necessity and Chance*, in *English Works*, vol. 5, XXXI, 380. This latter book adds to the early stages of the debate (Hobbes, *Liberty and Necessity*, 1654, and Bramhall, *A Defence of True Liberty*, 1655) a new series of 'animadversions' by Hobbes. The history of the controversy is set out by Hobbes at the beginning of *Questions* (1–2). Subsequent references

are to *Questions*, the Roman numeral referring to the number of the question.

11. Hobbes, *Questions*, XXXV, 425.
12. Hobbes, *Questions*, XXXI, 427.
13. On the history, but also on the historiography, of the distinction, see William J. Courtenay, *Capacity and Volition. A History of the Distinction of Absolute and Ordained Power* (Bergamo: Pierluigi Lubrina Editore, 1990).
14. 'Deus non potest facere nisi quod facit, nec dimettere nisi quod dimittit' (Abelard's oral statement reported by Odon de Soissons in edition of Pierre Lombard, *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae*, vol. 1.2, Rome: Grottaferrata, 1971, 298). See analysis by W. J. Courtenay, *Capacity and Volition*, 44 et sq.
15. See Leibniz, *Essais de théodicée* (Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1969), 376: 'Au lieu que l'évêque de Derry [Bramhall] a fort bien remarqué dans sa réponse à l'article 35, 327 [the page numbers quoted by Leibniz are those of the original version of *Questions* (1656)], qu'il ne s'ensuit qu'une nécessité hypothétique, telle que nous accordons tous aux événements par rapport à la prescience de Dieu; pendant que M. Hobbes veut que même la prescience divine seule suffirait pour établir une nécessité absolue des événements'.
16. 'Omnis potestas sequitur voluntatem. Cum enim dico quia possum loqui vel ambulare, subauditur: si volo. Si enim non sub intelligitur voluntas, non est potestas sed necessitas.' Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, II, 10, in *Opera omnia*, ed. F. S. Schmitt (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1946–61), vol. 2, 107; *Why God Became Man*, trans. J. Fairweather, in *The Major Works*, ed., introd. by B. Davies and G. R. Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 326. (I have amended the translation at one point to make it more literal.)
17. Hobbes, *Questions*, XII, 136.
18. Hobbes, *Questions*, XII, 136.
19. Hobbes, *Questions*, XII, 137. The following quotation from Anselm expresses the same idea: 'si autem vultis cognoscere quae vestra voluntas sit recta: illo pro certo est recta, quae subiacet voluntati dei' (Anselm, *Epistola 414*, in *Opera omnia*, ed. F. S. Schmitt, vol. 5, 360).
20. Hobbes, *Questions*, XII, 137.
21. Hobbes, *Questions*, XII, 137.
22. Hobbes, *Questions*, XV, 212.
23. Hobbes, *Questions*, XV, 212.
24. See Michel Spanneut, *Le Stoïcisme des Pères de l'Eglise de Clément de Rome à Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Seuil, 1957), 272.

25. See John Bramhall, *Castigations of Mr. Hobbes his last Animadversions in the Case Concerning Liberty and Universal Necessity* (1657), subsequently referred to as *Castigations*, in *The Works of John Bramhall*, vol. 4 (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1844), 354.
26. Bramhall, *Castigations*, 352.
27. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, in *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, ed. A. C. Pegis, trans. L. Shapcote (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), 1a, qu. 19, art. 11.
28. Hobbes, *Questions*, 12.
29. Bramhall, *Castigations*, 355.
30. Hobbes, *Questions*, XV, 202.
31. Saint Augustine writes: 'poterat per potentiam, sed not poterat per iustitiam', *Contra Gaudentium*, I, 30, 35 (PL 43, 727; CSEL 53, 233); quoted by W. J. Courtenay, *Capacity and Volition*, 39, note 21. Bramhall makes almost verbatim use of Saint Augustine's argument. See Hobbes, *Questions*, XII, 132–3.
32. Bramhall, *Castigations*, 355.
33. On Simon Magus, who was called by his disciples the 'great power of God' and is sometime considered as the father of all Christian heresies, see Acts 8:9–24.
34. Bramhall, *Castigations*, 315.
35. Bramhall, *Castigations*, 315.
36. On Hobbes and covenant (or federal) theology, see A. Martinich, *The Two Gods of Leviathan. Thomas Hobbes on Religion and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 143–50. For the link between Hobbesian view on omnipotence and the criticism of covenant theology, see L. Foisneau, *Hobbes et la toute-puissance de Dieu* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2000), chap. IX, 'Le droit à l'interprétation', 339–58.
37. Whenever Bramhall introduces those scholastic distinctions into the discussion, Hobbes rejects them (e.g., *Questions*, XII, 140–1).
38. Anselm, *Why God Became Man*, 318–9 (*Cur Deus Homo*, 100). See comments by W. J. Courtenay, *Capacity and Volition*, 35.
39. *De Cive*, XV, 7, 174–5.
40. *Lev.*, xxvi, 6, 138/174.
41. Jean Bodin, *Les six livres de la république* ([1593], Paris: Fayard, 1986). The translation here is taken from *On Sovereignty. Four chapters from the Six Books of the Commonwealth*, ed. and trans. J. H. Franklin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), Book I, chapter 8, 12.
42. Hobbes, *Questions*, XII, 144.
43. Hobbes, *Questions*, XIV, 196.

44. Pufendorf, *On the Law of Nature and of Nations in Eight Books*, in *The Political Writings of Samuel Pufendorf*, ed. C. L. Carre, trans. M. J. Seidler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), I, VI, X, 124.
45. H. Warrender insists on the importance of God's sanctions in forging the will of God's subjects in his kingdom by nature in *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: His Theory of Obligation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 315. For a different understanding of our 'natural obligation' to God, see L. Foisneau, *Hobbes et la toute-puissance de Dieu*, 233–6.
46. Pufendorf, *On the Law of Nature and of Nations in Eight Books*, I, VI, X, 124.
47. Hobbes, *Questions*, XII, 115.
48. Hobbes, *Questions*, XII, 115.
49. Hobbes, *Questions*, XII, 144.
50. Bramhall, *Castigations*, 317.
51. See Courtenay, *Capacity and Volition*, 92.
52. See F. Oakley, *Omnipotence, Covenant and Order. An Excursion in the History of Ideas from Abelard to Leibniz* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984), 113–18; by the same author, see also 'Jacobean Political Theology: The Absolute and Ordinary Powers of the King', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 29–1 (1968).
53. Hobbes, *Questions*, 'To the reader', 24.
54. In *Questions* – even though this appeared nine years after the second edition of *De Cive* – Bramhall still refers to the page numbering of the 1642 edition.
55. Regarding the origins of these remarks, see *De Cive, Præfatio ad lectores*, 84.
56. Hobbes, *Questions*, XII, 132.
57. J. Bramhall, *A Defence of True Liberty* (London, 1655); reprint with a biographical note by G. Salgado (London: Gregg International Publishers, 1971), 82–3; see *Questions*, XII, 133.
58. 'Manifestum est igitur, esse in omni ciuitate aliquem *hominem unum*, vel *concilium* sive *curiam unam*, quæ potentiam in ciues singulos iure habet tantam, quantam extra ciuitatem vnusquisque habet in seipsum, id est, *summam siue absolutam*, viribus ciuitatis, neque vllâ aliâ re limitandam' (*De Cive*, VI, 18, 147/88).
59. Hobbes, *Questions*, XII, 146.
60. *Lev.*, xv, 4, 72/90. For further developments on the anti-machiavellianism of Hobbes's refutation, see L. Foisneau, 'Leviathan's Theory of Justice', in *Leviathan After 350 Years*, ed. L. Foisneau and T. Sorell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 114–22.
61. Bramhall, *Castigations*, 318. Italics are mine.

62. For a discussion of the idea that only God's omnipotence confers right, see K. Hoekstra, 'The *de facto* turn in Hobbes's Political Philosophy', in *Leviathan After 350 Years*, ed. L. Foisneau and T. Sorell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), in particular 64–73.
63. Hobbes, *De Cive*, XV, 7, *annotatio*, 223/175.
64. Hobbes, *Questions*, XII, 133.
65. See *Lev.*, xviii, 122–3/111.

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12 Hobbes on Salvation

In England after 1640 the study of Christian theology and the Scriptures whose chief aim was the bringing of religion to bear on political issues exploded in an astonishing number of directions. The theological and political catalyst for this new departure was the bewilderment of those Christians for whom, after the Reformation, judging what was required for gaining access to the kingdom of God had become a private matter. Salvation became the key concept in a new strain in the polemical literature ensuing from the civil wars, especially among divinity students, and 'the tidings of salvation'¹ became in England the focus of a mounting tide of words in print. Thomas Hobbes, the philosopher whom an influential strain of scholarship has charged of having instrumental views on religion, did his share in this common attempt to develop new ways of addressing the issue of salvation. 'Salvation' to Hobbes is not just an aspiration or right, or 'eternall *deliverance*',² or 'inheritance',³ that people happen to have. Rather, Hobbes's 'Christian State' seems designed to accommodate people's desire to be *saved* and neutralize the politically destabilizing thrust of this desire. Quite striking, especially to readers who approach Hobbes's text for the first time, is the theological minimalism packed into the idea that faith is required for salvation, although the only article (the '*unum necessarium*') that is necessary in order to have one's faith acknowledged as a 'title' to eternal salvation is that

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'Jesus is the Christ', and 'there is no other article of faith necessarily required to salvation'.⁴

In an early critical survey on Hobbes's writings, Philip Scot had wished 'the ingenuous reader to peruse it all and compare Mr. *Hobbs* his grounds to *St. Paul* and what I annex in the ensuing discourse'.⁵ Scot's appeal to the 'ingenuous reader' in his *Treatise of the schism of England* opens up a world of possibilities in understanding the meaning of Hobbes's religious and political ideas. And Paul, who more than any other author of the New Testament was interested in salvation, provides the theological vocabulary and framework that enabled Hobbes to come up with a political theology in which salvation functions as the connecting link between politics and theology.

I. BACKGROUND

It is salvation that bothered the first commentators on Paul's texts after the Reformation, and later on in Hobbes's century 'Locke's chief concern in examining the Scriptures was to learn "the way to Salvation"'.⁶ Locke stood in a long-standing tradition of commentators on and paraphrases of Paul's texts.⁷ For the effect of the mobilization of ideas that took place in the 1640s had been to launch a new vocabulary by which people could bring such political issues as obedience to the earthly authority to bear on a distinctively theological framework.⁸ Post-Reformation theologians and exegetes were committed to teasing out the underlying semantic pattern, of Semitic origin, in those texts, especially Paul's epistles, that were written in a different language, in this case Greek. Although the treatment of salvation in Paul's letters registers some striking departures from the orthodox fashion of dealing with the same topic in the 'church of the Jews', the concept is couched in terms that, to a well-educated readership, reveal 'a strong Semitic cast'.⁹ Robert Boyle, commenting on Paul's epistles, pointed out that 'other difficulties arise from Paul's language and style. Although the language is Greek, the idiom is Semitic'.¹⁰ Interestingly, a modern commentator has similarly argued that the meaning of Paul's letters cannot be grasped 'with a Greek ear'.¹¹ In this sense 'salvation' suffers from the semantic construal within a linguistic context that ignores the connections, unheard to a 'Greek ear', that Paul makes between such words as 'salvation', 'peace', and 'reconciliation' (as in 2 Cor. 5:19). The Semitic

notion of salvation was doomed to remain utterly foreign to a Greek, whose conception of time was cyclical and not linear and progressive. Thus salvation as the eventual fulfillment of the promise of God to his people cannot be construed within a Greek categorical framework.¹²

Talk of 'salvation', namely, of what was either necessary or unnecessary to gain full citizenship in the final kingdom of Christ, made sense only within a given network of signs and practices that after the Reformation happened to be dramatically rearranged. New paraphrases and commentaries were provided by a number of writers who shared the bewilderment of people throughout Europe who had lost their bearings as to which doctrines had to be endorsed to merit *eternal* salvation. Hobbes found himself heavily enmeshed in a milieu in which this new doctrinal context was being worked out in order to provide people with a more intelligible set of criteria for making sense of the Scriptures. However, the problem Hobbes was facing was not exclusively secular. To the contrary, the factions that had grown out of the old edifice of Catholic Christianity, and in 1640 were headed for the catastrophe of the civil wars, had their own stake in the definition of what was necessary for salvation. The massive work on Paul documented in the many commentaries and paraphrases of his letters was meant to provide a conceptual vocabulary for a notion of salvation suitable to the new religious and political context, and to preempt the design of those who claimed that salvation was already to be obtained in this world with the establishment of the kingdom of God that had already begun.

There is not sufficient space here to trace the intellectual descent of Paul's influence through the paraphrases and commentaries published in England in mid-seventeenth century, but I think it is important to see that one significant figure stood at the centre of this broad interest in the Pauline treatment of the issue of salvation, and that was Hugo Grotius. And Grotius, in the opinion of his own century, 'was without doubt more the author of the *De veritate religionis christianae* than of *De iure belli ac pacis*'.¹³ But besides his more strictly apologetic works, such as the *De veritate*, he figures in the history of modern biblical criticism as the author of the *Annotationes* on both the Old and New Testaments, published between 1641 and 1646, a work in the tradition of his fellow-countryman, Erasmus of Rotterdam, that was to influence studies in biblical criticism

throughout Europe,¹⁴ stressing the theological centrality of the issue of what doctrines were necessary 'for you to know for your salvation'.¹⁵

In the wake of Grotius, Henry Hammond, a former chaplain of Charles I, expelled from Christ Church following the parliamentary Visitation in 1648, wrote a commentary on Paul that provided the background register of theological tenets that were to become the stock-in-trade of the militant political theology informing the intellectual debates of the English civil wars. Hammond, an Arminian of the Laudian School, wrote *A paraphrase, and annotations upon all the books of the New Testament* and is credited with being the father of English biblical criticism. Hammond's *Paraphrase* – which referred to Grotius as 'most judicious and learned' and 'most excellent' – is only *one* case in a plethora of works in which Grotius's *Annotationes* resonated as an inspiring commentary on Paul.¹⁶ Indeed, the *Annotationes* provided a dense apparatus of glosses and notes by which modern readers could bridge the gap between the need to make sense of their position in a world that, in the wake of the Reformation, had become increasingly opaque and the need for a text that was credible as a fair testimony of God's word. The 'paraphrase', namely the making perspicuous by means of 'a greater circuit of words' of obscure terms and phrases, was meant to establish 'the plain meaning of the words'.¹⁷ And it was by means of such commentaries and paraphrases that people could merge the horizons of meaning of Paul's texts with their own horizons of understanding¹⁸ and take their bearings on the central issue, namely what it was necessary to believe in order to have access to the kingdom of God, a question that had become increasingly puzzling.

2. WEAKNESS OF THE LAW

According to Hobbes, Jesus Christ had promised the institution of such a kingdom only *after* his next coming. The time of 'regeneration' – as Hobbes calls the timeframe 'between the ascension and the general resurrection'¹⁹ – is marked by the silence of God's word and by the absence of prophets authorized to convey his intentions and lead humankind in building a community according to his dictates. Although some scholars have argued that there are remnants of a 'divine command theory' clearly detectable in Hobbes's text under

the thin disguise of laws of nature, it seems that humankind during regeneration is unable to know that a given utterance is the true word of God. Hobbes argues that God has actually withdrawn from the world, and that human beings are deprived of any natural means of understanding his will. This Hobbesian narrative of withdrawal echoes the story told by Paul in the synagogue of Antioch (Acts 13:16–41), in which the apostle expounded a narrative of biblical history, starting from the exile of the people of God in Egypt, through the announcement of the second coming of Christ. This grandiose narrative of the diminishing presence of God in the world has an underlying moral purpose to caution people against the foolishness of belief in a substantial and eucharistic presence of God in the world.

The issue of an objective, namely divinely sanctioned, set of instructions on how to reach the Kingdom of God was sufficiently critical in England to produce a condition of endemic conflict whose outcome was in fact civil war. The problem for Hobbes laid in the natural understanding of the word of God, or the possibility of pinning down a 'natural law' accessible to normal comprehension without supernatural assistance. According to Hobbes, abuses of Scripture were sustaining a type of 'natural' law that was supposed to bring about the mystical installation of God's Kingdom before the end of time. This law, although 'natural' insofar as it bypassed the will of the sovereign, could turn out to be at odds with 'the doctrine established by him whom God hath set in the place of Moses'.²⁰ Hobbes postulates a time in which God had reigned directly over men – the image of a peaceful golden age in which God governed men already to be found in Plato.²¹ However, during the 'regeneration' – a time in which God has withdrawn from the earth – men, as a consequence, must obey the laws promulgated by their earthly sovereign. For Hobbes a difficulty immediately arises concerning those individuals who 'confound Lawes with Right', for they 'continue still to doe what is permitted by divine Right, notwithstanding it be forbidden by the civill Law'.²² This confusion is the crucial political focus of Hobbes's philosophical and theological reflections in *Leviathan*: the political problem people were compelled to address as soon as the Jews, with the election of Saul, 'refused to be governed by God any more'.²³ Rejecting the direct rule of God required men to set up enduring institutions in the absence of God's commandments and

to avoid the risk of taking 'for His law whatsoever is propounded by every man in His name'.²⁴

The objective of the third book of *Leviathan* is to work out a viable strategy for placating the war among factions during the temporary absence of God by neutralizing 'Christ's effectiveness' (*Wirkung Christi*),²⁵ namely, the actual and efficient presence of Christ in the *interim* of 'regeneration'. Hobbes's theological enemies, for whom the Kingdom of Christ had already begun – and in the words of a twentieth-century Hobbist, Carl Schmitt, 'was a political entity liable to trigger a civil war' – strongly supported the idea of a mystical and 'eucharistic' presence of Christ 'even in this world', as Alexander Rosse, Hobbes's contemporary, pointed out:²⁶

After Mr. Hobbs hath toyled himself in vain, to prove that Christ hath no Kingdom in this world, at last is content to allow Christ the Kingdom of Grace, which is as much as we desire; for we know that the Kingdom of glory is not yet come: Christ then is King of his Church militant here, and reigneth in the hearts of his faithful, and performs all the offices of a King, even in this world, by prescribing laws, by ruling, defending, rewarding, punishing, though not in so ample a manner, as hereafter, he also conquereth and subdueth the enemies of his Church, though not fully till the consummation of the world: He also enlargeth the territories and bounds of his Kingdom, that he might fulfil the profesies, and make good his Fathers gift. *Psal. 2. I have given thee the heaven for thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth for thy possession.* This is that Kingdom, which is in the new Testament so often called the Kingdom of God, and of heaven; this is that Kingdom which in the resurrection Christ will deliver up to God his Father, I Cor. 15.

On the other side of the divide there were people like James Ferguson, according to whom the present time was characterized, in terms akin to Hobbes's own vocabulary, as 'the time of the not performance of promised salvation':²⁷

Thorough believers have heaven and salvation already in right and by promise, . . . yet, the Lord . . . seeth it necessary to delay the performance, and not to give them present possession upon their right, for, if there were present possession given, there would be no need of this grace of hope, whereby the believer doth patiently expect salvation promised.

A number of commentators marked the temporal distance of the divine kingdom by speaking of it in terms of a 'right' or 'inheritance' to be acquired by means of faith in Christ. Jonathan Crell was

particularly clear on this point, maintaining: 'Because without his death hee could not discharge the legacies given to Believers', this fact justified the faithful having 'a present right, interest, or claime unto the future Blessings promised in God's Covenant, and bequeathed in his Will and Testament, to create, assigne, and convey, rights, interests, and claims'.²⁸ Crell read Paul's letter to the Galatians, where the Christian's path to salvation is expounded in terms of commitments and entitlements, in strictly juridical terms as a legal issue, where the debt or interest is to be 'discharged' by means of divine grace. Hobbes expressed himself in similar terms on the issue of the justification of Christian righteousness, maintaining that faith in Christ 'gives him the title, in God's acceptance, of *just*'.²⁹

The project of 'rescheduling' and deferring the beginning of the final kingdom was consistent with Paul's central concern with the nexus performance/future salvation. Paul had questioned the claim that 'works of the law' (Rom. 3:20) would confer a 'righteous status' obtained without the input of grace. Hobbes picked up on this Pauline tenet, claiming that 'if by righteousness be understood the justice of the works themselves, there is no man that can be saved',³⁰ and alleging that mere obedience to the law is not sufficient for salvation. Here Hobbes takes his readers by the hand and leads them into a world that has been created by the apostle Paul, a world in which the authority of Paul had woven together law and sin, faith and salvation with an invisible thread. Hobbes exploits the 'Hebrew meaning' of such old Greek words to accommodate the subject's wish to be saved within his Christian Commonwealth. His move eventuates in a dramatic disempowerment or desacralization of any *natural* law that was directly accessible to intuition or the subject's conscience. Obedience to such a law, made perfect by full insight into its divine content, would in his opinion be a dangerous shortcut to salvation. Hobbes justified his move with reference to Paul's claim that the law is not only 'weak' (*asthenés*) but also 'useless' (*anophelés*) to attain eternal salvation (Heb. 7:18).

It is worth noting that in *Leviathan*, particularly in chapter xliii, Hobbes applies a consistently Pauline conception of the law to whatever 'prompts' and 'counsels' might exceed the will of the sovereign – 'remnants' of the time of prophets that might promise citizens of the nation State more direct access to the Kingdom of heaven. In his implicit commentary on Romans 3:21–6 Hobbes takes up the Pauline

theme of the weakness of the law and introduces the topic of 'faith', which features in his discourse as something 'necessary' to salvation. In Galatians 5:4–5 Paul had illustrated the consequences of the weakness of the law by warning Christians against the risk of substituting law for the person of Christ as the agent of salvation.³¹ So, in his commentary on Galatians 5:4, Obadiah Walker had pointed out that 'to embrace circumcision after Christ's coming is to believe that Christ is not come; that he is not that promised seed, and therefore in effect to disclaim him'. Hobbes's position on what is necessary for salvation is reminiscent of Galatians 5:4–5, when in *Leviathan* he points out that

all that is necessary *to salvation* is contained in two virtues, *faith in Christ*, and *obedience to laws*. The latter of these, if it were perfect, were enough to us. But because we are all guilty of disobedience to God's law, not only originally in Adam, but also actually by our own transgressions, there is required at our hands now, not only *obedience* for the rest of our time, but also a *remission* of sins for the time past; which remission is the reward of our faith in Christ. That nothing else is necessarily required to salvation is manifest from this, that the kingdom of heaven is shut to none but to sinners; that is to say, to the disobedient, or transgressors of the law; nor to them, in case they repent, and believe all the articles of Christian faith necessary to salvation.³²

Hobbes realized that Paul's text provided an exceptional theological framework to build a case against those who claimed that mere obedience to the dictates of any ruler pretending to be the mouthpiece of God was sufficient to gain heavenly citizenship. He also recognized in the Pauline theory of justification the most effective antidote against all claims to actualize and make eucharistically present the kingdom of Christ on earth by deriving 'eternal salvation' from a 'perfect' obedience to the law. In what follows we shall see that the requirement of 'faith' was set out by Hobbes in order to strengthen the subjects' allegiance to the sovereign, according to him the ultimate interpreter of the theological content of such a faith.

3. WHOM TO OBEY?

Hobbes was mainly concerned with those theories that claimed the direct commands of God were intelligible even *after* Christ's ascension and that obedience to such commands was an effective means to achieving salvation. Salvation was contingent on obedience

to God's dictates but an influential theological strain had opened up a gap in people's conscience between obedience to God and obedience to the lawful sovereign. In *Leviathan* chapter xliii Hobbes set out to address this critical political issue, posed in stark terms in tracts such as James Ferguson's *Brief Exposition*:

A servant can never discharge his duty . . . which he oweth unto his master, except he have an high esteem of Christ, and in the first place, become an obedient servant unto Him, that so from love to Christ he may yieeld himself obedient to his master in Christ, in so far as obedience to him doth not crosse that obedience which he oweth to Christ: for, he biddeth them be *obedient unto their masters as unto Christ*, and so implyeth they must be first obedient unto Christ.³³

On obedience to God's servant the sovereign, *Leviathan* chapter xliii explicitly argues that

THE most frequent pretext of sedition and civil war in Christian Commonwealths hath a long time proceeded from a difficulty, not yet sufficiently resolved, of obeying at once both God and man, then when their commandments are one contrary to the other. It is manifest enough that when a man receiveth two contrary commands, and knows that one of them is God's, he ought to obey that, and not the other, though it be the command even of his lawful sovereign (whether a monarch or a sovereign assembly), or the command of his father. The difficulty therefore consisteth in this, that men, when they are commanded in the name of God, know not in diverse cases whether the command be from God, or whether he that commandeth do but abuse God's name for some private ends of his own.³⁴

What Hobbes holds as necessary to salvation is that people *believe* that 'Jesus is the Christ', for after God's withdrawal people cannot in fact *know* that a command is enacted either by God or on God's behalf; they can only *believe* it. John Bramhall, one of Hobbes's most important contemporary critics, argued that 'if the King commands any thing which is repugnant to the Law of God or Nature, we ought rather to obey God than men',³⁵ evidence enough that Hobbes's enemies were trying to reconnect the circuit natural law/salvation. For Hobbes,

this difficulty of obeying both God and the civil sovereign on earth, to those that can distinguish between what is necessary and what is not necessary for their reception into the kingdom of God, is of no moment. For if the command of the civil sovereign be such as that it may be obeyed without the forfeiture of life eternal, not to obey it is unjust; . . . But if the command

be such as cannot be obeyed, without being damned to eternal death, then it were madness to obey it, and the counsel of our Saviour takes place, 'Fear not those that kill the body, but cannot kill the soul'. [Matthew 10:28] All men therefore that would avoid both the punishments that are to be in this world inflicted for disobedience to their earthly sovereign, and those that shall be inflicted in the world to come for disobedience to God, have need be taught to distinguish well between what is, and what is not, necessary to eternal salvation.³⁶

Here Hobbes opens up a breach in the nexus law/salvation, borrowing Paul's theological framework and introducing a crucial theological innovation. Hobbes claims that people – in the time of regeneration – cannot know if a given utterance is the word of God. For to Hobbes one can believe only a person whom one has heard. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob believed God because they heard him. Here the word of God received in the Scriptures is no longer immediately evident and Christians can only *believe* that Scriptures are a truthful testimony of His word. Hobbes's concern for what it means to 'hear' the word of God becomes manifest already in the first two chapters of *Leviathan* (*Of Sense* and *Of Imagination*), where he introduces the question of the perception of the sensible qualities of things. Hobbes seeks to distinguish the two spheres that traditional philosophy had somehow blurred: that of faith compared with what we know from sensation. Having asserted the philosophical evidence for his position, Hobbes writes that 'the philosophy-schools, through all the universities of Christendom, grounded upon certain texts of Aristotle, teach another doctrine'. They maintain

for the cause of *hearing*, that the thing heard sendeth forth an *audible species*, that is, an *audible aspect*, or *audible being seen*, which entering at the ear maketh hearing. Nay for the cause of *understanding* also, they say the thing understood sendeth forth *intelligible species*, that is, an *intelligible being seen*, which coming into the understanding makes us understand. I say not this as disapproving the use of universities; but because I am to speak hereafter of their office in a commonwealth, I must let you see on all occasions by the way, what things would be amended in them, amongst which the frequency of insignificant speech is one.³⁷

Hobbes makes clear that in the *interim* of waiting for the second coming of Christ, between the terminus (*a quo*) of the Ascension and the terminus (*ad quem*) of the fulfilling of Christ's last promise,

Christians will not *know* that the Scripture is God's word. Not being able to hear his decrees, they can only *believe* that the word is God's true word.

It is manifest, therefore, that Christian men do not know, but only believe the Scripture to be the word of God; and that the means of making them believe which God is pleased to afford men ordinarily is according to the way of nature, that is to say, from their teachers. It is the doctrine of St. Paul, concerning Christian faith in general (*Rom. 10:17*): 'Faith cometh by hearing', that is, by hearing our lawful pastors. He saith also (*vss. 14, 15*): 'How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?' Whereby it is evident that the ordinary cause of believing that the Scriptures are the word of God is the same with the cause of the believing of all other articles of our faith: namely: the hearing of those that are by the law allowed and appointed to teach us, as our parents in their houses, and our pastors in the churches.³⁸

If knowledge of God's word is *impossible* then there is no way to derive salvation from mere obedience to the law of God, apart from the sovereign command. Hobbes was targeting writers who claimed to have privileged communication with God even without *hearing* his word, and whom he categorized as 'Enthusiasts'.³⁹ So, for instance, Paul Bayne in his commentary on Ephesians had written that, 'even as the Conduit-pipes carry the water hither and thither, so doth the word convey the graces of the spirit into our hearts . . . when men can be without hearing, not feeling need of it, as sometimes they have done'.⁴⁰ Hobbes follows a track that was to be taken by many others. The first authoritative modern commentary on Paul, Hammond's *Paraphrase*, warns with distinctive vehemence against the risk that 'by the possessing by men's minds with this opinion of *new light*, or the voice of *God's Spirit within* them, the *authority* of the whole *written word of God* in effect is *superseded* and evacuated'.⁴¹

4. CONCLUSIONS

Hobbes understands that the mechanism contrived by Paul functions only if one condition obtains, that is, if one introduces the supplement of faith, by which each subject is 'entitled' to be received in

God's kingdom. It is 'Faith', paradoxically, that is required in order to resist the theological seduction brought forth by the 'many false prophets, that sought reputation with the people by feigned dreams and visions',⁴² and who have announced the sufficiency of a fully intelligible *natural* law 'for their *reception* into the *kingdom of God*'.⁴³ Such a law is alleged as the true word of God, uttered in contradiction with the pronouncements of the lawful sovereign and listened to and taken to be true by those 'fools' who believe that the *kingdom of God* is established already 'in this world'.

Hobbes argues, as we have already noted, that during the period of regeneration obedience to the law is no longer perfect because after God's withdrawal from the world one can only *believe* that a given utterance expresses God's will. Prophets have ceased to speak to the people, and God's word has become distant and uncommunicative. Paul's Mosaic law, like Hobbes's natural law, suffers from this unsightly condition: that the law is the dead 'crater' of God's talk.⁴⁴ During the English civil war, to proclaim the uselessness of the law, that is to say of a law in which God's mind shines vividly forth, had become a matter of compelling *political* concern. Hobbes rejects the theological requirement of the sufficiency of legal obedience and disclaims its suitability (even 'if it were perfect') to obtaining eternal salvation. He collapses faith and obedience to the *civil* law by making the terms mutually dependent. For Hobbes obedience to the lawful sovereign is inherently consistent with one's faithfulness to Christ's new covenant, and the simplicity of the gesture required to gain access to the kingdom of Christ, the simple belief in the one article that Jesus is the Christ, supersedes the distinction between 'faith and faithful works'⁴⁵ that had so troubled reformed theologians throughout Europe. For, if emphasis on obedience was a sort of *topos* in post-Reformation literature, faith was the *via regia* leading to the achievement of final citizenship in the world to come. So Melancthon, 'whose primary ethical emphasis focuses ever on obedience', maintained that worldly authority is 'the voice of the Ten Commandments'.⁴⁶ Hobbes, by combining these two aspects, turns them into the two sides of the same coin, a coin minted in the Pauline mold, alleging that 'all that is necessary to salvation is contained in both these joined together'.⁴⁷

Current scholarship on Hobbes's religious ideas has contributed to opening up 'a new historical horizon for the interpretation of

Hobbes in general'.⁴⁸ This new horizon shows that his argument for the sovereign determination of what people should reckon as God's word is not, in fact, exclusively 'secular'. Although Hobbes gives no evidence for a divine warrant to buttress the office of sovereignty, the fact of the command of God being contingent on the sovereign's will, and thus stripped of independent status, does not diminish the authority of the sovereign, rather the contrary. But although a persistent and influential strain in Hobbes scholarship has argued for an interpretation allowing the civil law to stand on its own feet, Hobbes knew all too well that any discourse on law, authority and obedience was bound to be reminiscent and dangerously evocative of its Pauline burden. Hobbes is always aware of his implied reader, and instead of targeting secret connoisseurs of his doctrines, to whom only he could 'write so boldly',⁴⁹ he takes seriously his public mission as the purveyor of a new science of politics. He talks to Christian readers and instead of ignoring or mocking their concern for salvation he keenly addresses this concern by means of a challenging theological innovation. This innovation, insofar as it has affected current discourse on salvation and impinged on its grammar – somehow confirming Nietzsche's *dictum*, that we are not rid of God because we still have faith in grammar – can be grasped only if we place it in a conceptual world construed by the apostle Paul in a language – the pseudo-Semitic language of Paul's epistles – packed with underlying theological assumptions. It is the inherent grammar of this Pauline idiom that allows the performance of this minimal set of moves by which the title 'just' is assigned to those who have faith in Christ, in this way making them suitable to be received into the final kingdom of Christ.

The Pauline idiom is not a transparent medium in which Hobbes could move freely, however. On the contrary, such an idiom is a cohort of restrictions, constraints, stumbling blocks, and mandatory turns. It is as if we would 'see one person after another walking the same paths and we know already where he will make a turn, where he will keep on going straight ahead without noticing the turn, etc., etc.'. ⁵⁰ Hobbes deals with the political theology of his time and roams in its highly codified register. He maximally exploits its syntactical potentialities allowing himself to force its internal structure by making the content of faith contingent on the sovereign's judgment. He chooses to play his theoretical game on a Pauline chessboard but

comes up with a striking move: subjects have to have faith in Christ in order to be saved, but the contents and specifics of such a faith are determined by the sovereign. Hobbes's minimalism serves to prevent a concentration in the State of convictions and beliefs that might disarm the sovereign, and lead back to the state of nature.

A strong current in contemporary Hobbes scholarship has emphasized his humanistic upbringing. But the humanist Hobbes is a *secular* thinker in a way that sounds somewhat anachronistic, and I think that a fairer classification of his ideas, and one that is more respectful of the tight nexus of theology and politics that characterizes his work, would be the label 'Christian humanist' once coined by Paul Oskar Kristeller.⁵¹ Hobbes's theory that salvation cannot be derived from (natural) law is a product of the working out of the extraordinary potentialities of Paul's language, especially of his 'unheard-of' connection between faith and a cohort of soteriological terms entailing a linear and messianic conception of historical time.

It is by adopting this Pauline register that Hobbes manages to universalize the political domain by doing away with all those natural bonds and allegiances that were at odds with an impersonal obedience to the lawful sovereign. Indeed, the political utopia envisioned by Hobbes aims at erasing all remnants of a natural, communal acquaintance among individuals. The Hobbesian state articulates the notion of citizenship through a conceptual vocabulary first expounded by Paul: any particular bond, any friendship, any impulse of 'admiration',⁵² any personal allegiance, any 'spiritual commonwealth'⁵³ is banned from the State, and politics – through a linear descent that stretches back to Paul – becomes the realm of pure universality. But this new way of envisioning politics is sustained by the faith of the Christians, namely, by their clinging to a very simple agenda of beliefs and practical commitments. Hobbes and Paul were responding to the same challenge that 'what is being constructed before our very eyes is the communitarization of the public sphere, the renunciation of the law's transcendent neutrality'.⁵⁴ Such a radical universalization of the public sphere is the major goal of Hobbes's theoretical undertaking in *Leviathan*. So his main objective remains political, but the way he envisions a viable solution to the question of how to forestall the endemic conflict of all against all is centered on a specific psychological strategy. His reliance on the Pauline theology of salvation is contingent on his effort to shift people's aspiration

to save their souls away from the 'foolish' illusion of building the kingdom of God on earth.

NOTES

1. Paul Bayne, *An entire commentary upon the whole Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Ephesians: wherein the text is...opened, with a logical analysis...confutation of Arminianisme and popery...* (London: Printed by M. F. for I. B. and are to be sold by S. Gellibrand, 1645), 138.
2. Henry Hammond, *A paraphrase, and annotations upon all the books of the New Testament: briefly explaining all the difficult places thereof* (London: Printed by J. Flesher for Richard Royston, 1653).
3. Johannes Crellius, *The Iustification of a Sinner: being the maine argument of the Epistle to the Galatians* (London: Printed by T. H. and are to be sold at the Gun in Ivy-Lane, 1650).
4. *Lev.*, xliii, 16, 327/405.
5. Philip Scot, *A treatise of the schism of England. Wherein particularly Mr. Hales and Mr. Hobbs are modestly accosted* (Amsterdam: [...], 1650), 52.
6. A. W. Wainwright, 'Introduction' to J. Locke, *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St Paul to the Galathians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 39.
7. Paul's 'fortune' in early-reformed England goes back to the late kingdom of Henry VIII, the first Greek book printed in England having been *De Joannis Chrysostomi Homiliae Duae* (edited by John Cheke, and published in London in 1543), the most comprehensive commentary on Paul of its time.
8. Interestingly, Paul's letter to the Ephesians was the most commented among the Pauline epistles during the English civil wars. In this pastoral document Paul (Ephesians 6:5) raises the issue of the subject's obedience to the lawful ruler in very cogent terms.
9. D. Hill, *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings. Studies in the Semantics of Soteriological Terms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 18.
10. Robert Boyle, *Some Considerations Touching the Style of the Holy Scriptures* (London: for Henry Herringman, 1661), 157.
11. J. Taubes, *Die politische Theologie des Paulus* (München: Fink, 1993), 12. Taubes recalls a conversation with Emil Staiger: 'Taubes, do you know yesterday I read the apostle Paul's letters? – and then he came up with deeper exasperation: but that's not Greek! That's Yiddish! – And then I said – Yes, Professor, and that's why I understand them!'
12. See S. Quinzio, *Radici ebraiche del moderno* (Milan: Adelphi, 1990).

13. J. P. Heering, *Hugo Grotius as Apologist for the Christian Religion. A Study of his Work De veritate religionis Christianae* (1640) (Leiden: Brill, 2004).
14. See A. Schweitzer, *Geschichte der Paulinischen Forschung: Von der Reformation bis auf die Gegenwart* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1911), 1–2.
15. Quoted in Heering, *Hugo Grotius as Apologist for the Christian Religion*, 70.
16. For an extensive scrutiny of commentaries and paraphrases in England in the seventeenth century, see H. Graf Reventlow, *Bibelautorität und Geist der Moderne: Die Bedeutung des Bibelverständnisses für die geistesgeschichtliche und politische Entwicklung in England von der Reformation bis zur Aufklärung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoech und Ruprecht, 1980), 328–70.
17. Hammond, like Hobbes, was targeting ‘the Enthusiast’s pretensions’ that Scriptures were eminently amenable to a strictly supernatural or ‘extraordinary’ insight. H. Hammond, ‘Postscript Concerning New Light or, Divine Illumination’ in *A paraphrase, and annotations*, § 13ff.
18. I borrow the notion of the ‘merging of horizons’ from H. G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1972). Engl. trans. *Truth and Method* (London: Sheed and Word, 1989).
19. *Lev.*, xlii, 7, 269/337.
20. *Lev.*, xl, 8, 253/321.
21. Plato, *Statesman*, 271 c.
22. *De Cive*, xiv, § 3.
23. *Lev.*, xliv, 4, 334/413.
24. *Lev.*, xlii, 46, 286/357.
25. C. Schmitt, *Glossarium. Aufzeichnungen der Jahre 1947–1951* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1991), 243. Hobbes’s objective, according to Schmitt, was ‘to make Christ’s effectiveness undamaging in the social and political domain’.
26. Alexander Rosse, *Leviathan Drawn out with a Hook or Animadversions upon MR HOBBS HIS LEVIATHAN* (London: Printed by Tho. Newcomb, for Richard Royston at the Angel in Ivy-Lane, 1653), 65. Thomas Tenison, in a later animadversion against Hobbes, expressed the same conviction as to the presence of a kingdom of Christ already operating in history: ‘There is therefore reason for Divines, to insist upon a Kingdome of Christ, already come’; T. Tenison, *The creed of Mr. Hobbes examined; in a feigned conference between him, and a student in divinity* (London: Printed for Francis Tyton, 1670), 233.
27. James Ferguson, *A Brief Exposition of the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians* (London: for the Company of Stationers, 1659), 460.

28. Johannes Crellius, *The Iustification of a Sinner: the Main Argument of the Epistle to the Galatians*. Folio. 1650 (a translation from Crellius, a Socinian divine, made by Thomas Lushington), 305.
29. *Lev.*, xliii, 20, 329/408.
30. *Lev.*, xliii, 20, 329/408.
31. O. Walker, *A paraphrase and annotations upon all the Epistles of St Paul* (At the theater in Oxford: [s.n.], 1684), 193. The epistle to the Galatians ('an Epitome or breuiat of that to the Romans', according to Johannes Crellius) was regarded by Luther as Paul's declaration of independence from the Mosaic Law. See M. Luther, *A Commentarie of M. Doctor Martin Luther vpon the Epistle of S. Paul to the Galathians, first collected and gathered word by word out of his preaching, and now out of Latine faithfully translated into English for the vnlearned . . .* (London: by Thomas Vautroullier, 1575).
32. *Lev.*, xliii, 3, 322/398.
33. Ferguson, *A Brief Exposition of the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, 420–1.
34. *Lev.*, xliii, 1, 321/397.
35. John Bramhall, *The Serpent Salve, or, a Remedy for the Biting of an Aspe* (1643), in *Works* (Dublin: at His Majesties Printing-House, 1676), 542.
36. Bramhall, *The Serpent Salve*, 542.
37. *Lev.*, i, 5, 4/7.
38. *Lev.*, xliii, 8, 324/401.
39. *Lev.*, xii, 19, 56/69.
40. Paul Bayne, *An entire commentary upon the whole Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Ephesians: wherein the text is . . . opened, with a logicall analysis . . . confutation of Arminianisme and popery* (London: Printed by M. F. for I. B. and are to be sold by S. Gellibrand, 1645), 138.
41. Hammond, *A paraphrase and annotations*, § 33.
42. *Lev.*, xliii, 1, 321/398.
43. *Lev.*, xliii, 2, 321/398.
44. 'The activity of the community is related to the Gospel only insofar as it is no more than a crater formed by the explosion of a shell and seeks to be no more than a void in which the Gospel reveals itself'. K. Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. E. C. Hoskyns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 36.
45. J. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in *The Poems of John Milton*, ed. J. Carey and A. Fowler (London and New York: Longman, 1980).
46. T. J. O'Keeffe, *Milton and the Pauline Tradition* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1982), 110.

47. *Lev.*, xliii, 19, 329/407. Thus, Hobbes argues, 'the question by which of the two we are justified is impertinently disputed'. *Lev.*, xliii, § 20, 329/408.
48. C. Schmitt, *Politische Theologie II: Die Legende von der Erledigung jeder Politischen Theologie* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1970), 88.
49. See. E. Curley, "'I durst not write so boldly,'" or How to Read Hobbes's Theological-Political Treatise', in *Hobbes e Spinoza*, ed. D. Bostrenghi (Napoli: Bibliopolis, 1993), 497–593.
50. L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Occasions 1912–1951* (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993), 183.
51. 'It is probably preferable to limit the term Christian humanist to those scholars with a humanist classical and rhetorical training who explicitly discussed religious or theological problems in all or some of their writings'. P. O. Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought. Vol. 1: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanist Strains* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1961), 86.
52. *Lev.*, xxx, 177/222.
53. *Lev.*, xlii, 128, 317/394.
54. A. Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 9.

13 Hobbes and the Cause of Religious Toleration

Many readers of *Leviathan* will be surprised by the suggestion that in that work Hobbes might have been – in intention and in act – a friend of religious toleration. Who could be further removed, on this issue, from that ‘saint of liberalism’,¹ John Locke? Locke’s *Letter on Toleration* sought a kind of separation of church and state,² arguing that each of these institutions has its own areas of legitimate concern, that the state exists to protect our temporal interests, and is entitled to use force to do so, but that it cannot use coercion to advance our spiritual interests. These are the province of the churches, which also cannot use force to achieve their ends. Since a saving faith must be uncoerced, they must rely on persuasion. Hobbes is certainly not a saint of liberalism in that sense. He advocates, not a separation of church and state, but a subordination of the church to the state.

On Hobbes’s view it is an essential prerogative of the sovereign to determine what books may be published and what doctrines may be taught, in public gatherings generally, but especially in the universities and the churches.³ He thinks the sovereign must not only see that doctrines harmful to peace *are not* taught but also ensure that doctrines promoting his absolute authority *are* taught. The Hobbesian sovereign is meant to exercise a very broad control of public discourse, in philosophy, in science, in politics and morals,

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and especially in religion. The fundamental purpose of his control is to prevent sedition.

Among the doctrines Hobbes regards as particularly seditious are two that many Christians in his day would have thought firmly based in Scripture: that 'faith and sanctity are not to be attained by study and reason, but by supernatural inspiration or infusion' (*Lev.*, xxix, 8, 169/212-13) and that 'whatsoever a man does against his conscience is sin' (*Lev.*, xxix, 7, 168-9/212).⁴ Since the rights of conscience were in Hobbes's day often invoked in favor of toleration, his rejection of the latter doctrine would be particularly troubling to its contemporary advocates. The sovereign's many rights include the right to determine which books of Scripture are canonical (*Lev.*, xxxiii, 1, 199-200/250-1), the right to decide how we should interpret passages in those books (*Lev.*, xxxiii, 25, 206/261), and the right to give legal force to the teachings of Scripture (*Lev.*, xxvi, 41, 149-50/187-89; *Lev.*, xxxiii, 24, 205-6/259-61).

So it was a pleasant paradox, about twenty years ago, when Alan Ryan published two papers suggesting that Hobbes might be more friendly to toleration than we generally give him credit for being.⁵ Among other things, Ryan noted that Hobbes's position leaves room for a large measure of toleration because his argument for imposing uniformity is essentially a pragmatic, political one. There are some opinions in religion that are dangerous to the peace and order of society, either because they may encourage subjects to rebel against their sovereign – notably the doctrine that we must obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29) – or because they may cause subjects to divide into factions and kill one another, as had frequently happened in the wars of religion of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁶ The sovereign may, and *should*, vigorously repress the expression of those opinions. But he should not care what people think privately, so long as they keep it to themselves and do not act antisocially.⁷ Unlike the true believer, whose goal is to save souls, the Hobbesian sovereign looks only to temporal ends and can justify imposing uniformity just to the extent that doing so helps him to achieve those temporal ends.

Not only does the pragmatic nature of Hobbes's argument leave room for a large measure of toleration, it also leads Hobbes to endorse leaving people alone when it is not necessary, for the good of the commonwealth, to interfere with them. The duty of the sovereign is to seek the well-being of his people (*Lev.*, xxx, 1, 175/219). One

aspect of that well-being is what Hobbes calls, in *The Elements of Law*, 'commodity of living'. Part of commodity of living is liberty, by which Hobbes there means 'That there be no prohibition without necessity of any thing to any man which was lawful to him in the law of nature, that is . . . , that there be no restraint of natural liberty, but what is necessary for the good of the commonwealth'.⁸ He reaffirms this view in *Leviathan*, when he argues that the sovereign has a duty to make only good laws, where the goodness of a law is measured by its necessity for the good of the people. (*Lev.*, xxx, 21, 182/229)

Hobbes claims in the Dedicatory Letter to *Leviathan* that he has tried to find a middle course between those who seek too much liberty and those who seek too much authority. Most readers of *Leviathan* have felt that he tilted too far in the direction of authority, and that is an understandable reaction to the positions described at the beginning of this paper. But to do Hobbes justice we must acknowledge those aspects of his thought that bring him closer to the center. One reason why Hobbes rejects repression of thought and expression beyond what is necessary for the good of the commonwealth is that he thinks it is counterproductive, provoking bitterness and resentment, and undermining the loyalty of the sovereign's subjects. In *Behemoth* he writes: 'A state can constrain obedience, but convince no error, nor alter the minds of them that believe they have the better reason. Suppression of doctrine does but unite and exasperate, that is, increase both the malice and power of them that have already believed them'.⁹ This may exaggerate the limits on the state's ability to produce uniformity in the area of religion. The Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions, with the help of 'the secular arm', seem to have been pretty effective in preventing the Reformation from spreading to those countries. But in the passage quoted Hobbes is clearly thinking of the results of Archbishop Laud's attempts to suppress the teaching of predestination and to impose the Book of Common Prayer on the Scots.¹⁰

Where Ryan argued merely that Hobbes was more favorable to toleration than we might have thought, Richard Tuck subsequently claimed that *Leviathan* is actually 'a defense of toleration'.¹¹ This probably goes too far, at least if we restrict ourselves to the first published version of *Leviathan*, the English edition of 1651. Later we will look at the passage in that work that constitutes Tuck's best evidence for this proposition. But Tuck reminds us, usefully, that

between 1666 and 1670 Hobbes wrote a number of works – the *Dialogue between a Philosopher and a Student of the Common Laws of England*, the Appendix to the Latin *Leviathan*, the *Historical Narration Concerning Heresy*, *Behemoth*, and the *Historia Ecclesiastica* – in which he argued that since the Long Parliament abolished the High Commission, there was no basis in English law for the prosecution of heresy.¹² He also implied rather strongly that there should not be. This implication surfaces, for example, in the conclusion of Hobbes's discussion of the Nicene Creed: 'The things the Fathers say outside Sacred Scripture in their individual explanations of the faith [e.g., in the decisions of church councils, like that held at Nicaea] do not oblige Christians, each of whom ought to search out his own salvation in Sacred Scriptures, not at another's risk, but at his own, very great risk'.¹³ Similarly in the second chapter of the Appendix Hobbes invokes the parable of the weeds in the wheat of Matthew 13:27–30 to show that the punishment of heresy should be left to God at the last judgement.¹⁴

These positions would surely exclude the imposition on the whole population of the Nicene Creed, a move contemplated in the Act of Uniformity considered by Parliament in 1667. Tuck argues that in opposing the intolerant policies advocated by the Anglicans and Presbyterians in the late 1660s, Hobbes was siding with 'the former Independents and other theological radicals from the Civil War years' and that this aligned him politically with 'the Cabal', the group of five government ministers, led by Shaftesbury, who replaced Clarendon as Lord Chancellor in 1667. Since Locke was then working as an aide to Shaftesbury, and beginning to develop his own defence of toleration,¹⁵ this made Hobbes and Locke political allies, at least with respect to the issue of religious toleration!

Tuck also reminds us that during this period from 1666–1670 Hobbes had his own personal reasons to fear religious intolerance. Beginning in the fall of 1666, and as late as the summer of 1668, Parliament was discussing, off and on, two forms of a bill 'against atheism and profanity'. The stronger of the two versions explicitly made it an offence, punishable by imprisonment or banishment, to deny such doctrines as the Trinity, or God's providence, or the divine authority of the books accepted as canonical in the Church of England, or the immortality of the soul, or the eternal torment of the wicked in hell. Each of these doctrines was one Hobbes might

plausibly be thought to have denied in *Leviathan*. Indeed, the committee in the House of Commons considering the earlier (and weaker) of the two bills was empowered to collect information specifically about *Leviathan*, and there was a motion in the House that *Leviathan* be burned. Aubrey says Hobbes heard a report that 'some of the bishops made a motion to have the good old gentleman burned for a heretic. Which he hearing, feared that his papers might be searched by their order, and he told me that he had burned part of them'.¹⁶ Hobbes himself was summoned to appear before a committee of the House of Lords in 1667. In the end these bills did not pass, and Hobbes was not burned.¹⁷ But these events must have given him a good scare, and a strong motive to support the toleration of religious difference.

Hobbes's support for toleration is not, however, entirely a response to the events of the late 1660s. Even in the English *Leviathan* of 1651 Hobbes had criticized the Roman Church's condemnation of Galileo as presupposing a misunderstanding of the purpose of Scripture, which in his view was to teach us how to achieve the Kingdom of God, not what the nature of the universe is (viii, 26, 38–9/45–6). Moreover, in chapter xliii of *Leviathan* he had argued that the path to the Kingdom is easy:

All that is necessary to salvation is contained in two virtues: *faith in Christ* and *obedience to laws*. The latter of these, if it were perfect, were enough to us. But because we are all guilty of disobedience to God's law, not only originally in Adam, but also actually by our own transgressions, there is required at our hands now, not only *obedience* for the rest of our time, but also *remission* of sins for the time past, which remission is the reward of our faith in Christ. (*Lev.*, xliii, 3, 322/398–9)

There are two things to notice about these requirements. First, you might think the reference here to obeying God's law implies that salvation requires adherence to the commandments of Scripture. But it does not. The law of Moses is not binding on Christians, and Jesus, according to Hobbes, issued no new commandments. He only *counseled* us to obey the laws we are already subject to [i.e., 'the laws of nature and the laws of our several sovereigns' (*Lev.*, xliii, 5, 322/399–400)]. Counsel is not command, and so lacks an essential feature of laws.¹⁸ If we obey the laws of the state and the laws of nature – where the latter require action only if there is reasonable

assurance of reciprocity (*Lev.*, xv, 36, 79/99) – we will have satisfied the requirement of obedience to laws.

Second, the faith in Christ Hobbes thinks required is not a belief that Jesus was divine. It is a belief that *Jesus is the Christ*, which Hobbes interprets to mean that Jesus was the Messiah, ‘the king God had before promised, by the prophets of the Old Testament, to send into the world to reign (over the Jews and over such of other nations as should believe in him) under himself eternally, and to give them that eternal life which was lost by the sin of Adam’ (*Lev.*, xliii, 11, 324/402). If, to be saved, we had to assent to ‘all the doctrines concerning Christian faith now taught (whereof the greatest part are disputed) . . . there would be nothing in the world so hard as to be a Christian’ (*Lev.*, xliii, 14, 325/403). But the faith necessary for salvation is easy: the thief who died with Jesus on the cross showed that he had it when he testified to his belief that Jesus was the king; and the Jews of Jesus’ time could have had it, simply by accepting that Jesus was the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament (*Lev.*, xliii, 15, 326/403–4).

This kind of minimalism about the requirements for salvation had been a popular argument for toleration ever since the mid-sixteenth century, when Castellio protested against the burning of Servetus in Geneva for having propagated his heretical interpretation of the doctrine of the Trinity. Though Hobbes probably carries doctrinal minimalism further than Castellio would have, he does have some claim to being an advocate of ‘Erasmian liberalism’,¹⁹ which emphasizes conduct at the expense of doctrine, suspends judgement on many theological issues, and insists that the faith required for salvation is simple and uncontroversial, at least among Christians. This move tends to undermine the claim that the suppression of heresy is necessary, not to save the heretics, but to save those so-far-faithful Christians whom the heretics might lead astray if they were permitted to defend their heresies, a goal that both Aquinas and Calvin had invoked to justify the suppression of heresy.²⁰

But there is another side of *Leviathan*, which we have not yet considered. Insofar as Hobbes is an Erasmian liberal, he stands with Castellio, Locke and those moderate Enlightenment figures who attempted to make a case for religious toleration within the framework of Christianity, broadly construed. But though Hobbes has one foot in the moderate mainstream of the Enlightenment, he has the

other in the radical Enlightenment Jonathan Israel describes in his book of that title.²¹ By the 'radical Enlightenment' Israel understands an intellectual movement that,

whether on an atheistic or deistic basis, rejected all compromise with the past and sought to sweep away existing structures entirely, rejecting the Creation as traditionally understood in Judeo-Christian civilization, and the intervention of a providential God in human affairs, denying the possibility of miracles, and reward and punishment in an afterlife, scorning all forms of ecclesiastical authority, and refusing to accept that there is any God-ordained social hierarchy, concentration of privilege or land-ownership in noble hands, or religious sanction for monarchy. (pp. 11–12)

Israel thinks that Spinoza played a central role in this movement, but denies that Hobbes was comparably important (p. 159). I think he is right about Spinoza, but wrong about Hobbes.²²

It is true, of course, that Hobbes is not *openly* atheistic or deistic,²³ and he certainly does not want to sweep away existing structures entirely. But then Spinoza's own religious position is ambiguous enough that some readers have thought he was a Christian.²⁴ And like Hobbes, Spinoza used secular arguments to defend the political structures that existed prior to the crises of his day. (The difference is that in the Netherlands of 1670 the status quo Spinoza defended was republican, not monarchical.) The affinities between Hobbes and Spinoza are really quite deep. It is true that Hobbes is not as bold as Spinoza in what he says about the creation. Spinoza clearly commits himself to the eternity of the world (*Ethics* I, Prop. 28). Hobbes's official teaching rejects the eternity of the world, but in his 'rejection' Hobbes mocks the arguments of those who use the paradoxes of infinity to show that the world must have had a beginning: 'Do not those who in this way take away the eternity of the world also, by the same act, take away the eternity of the world's maker?'²⁵ Because the arguments of the creationists involve the concept of infinity, which Hobbes says is beyond our comprehension, philosophers cannot settle this question by using natural reason. So he contents himself with affirming creation out of respect for Scripture and the customs and laws of his country. But since he holds that Scripture's aim is not to inform us about the nature of the world, only to show us how to achieve salvation (*Lev.*, viii, 26, 38–9/45), what this amounts to is that he accepts creation because the customs and laws

of his country do so. If the customs and laws of his country required acceptance of the eternity of the world, presumably that is what he would accept.²⁶

Again, whereas Spinoza clearly denies that God is providential, when he denies his God intellect, will, and ends (*Ethics* I, Prop. 31 and App.), Hobbes does not clearly deny divine providence. But he does interpret that doctrine in a way that would offer no comfort to the afflicted. As Hobbes reads the Book of Job (*Lev.*, xxxi, 6, 188/236–7), God's existence gives us no reason to think that what happens in the world is part of the plan of an omnipotent, omniscient and loving God, and that therefore there must be a good reason for whatever suffering occurs. God's absolute power makes whatever he chooses to do right, even if it involves inflicting horrendous suffering on an innocent man. There is a tension between this theology and the covenant theology of the Pentateuch, a tension that emerges clearly in *Leviathan*. Covenant theology commits God to rewarding obedience and punishing disobedience; Hobbes's God cannot be bound by any promises.²⁷ Moreover, not only would Hobbes's doctrine that God has no ends²⁸ make it difficult to defend a traditional conception of divine providence, it also, given Hobbes's definitions of law and command, entails the spinozistic heresy that God cannot be a lawgiver.²⁹

Again, whereas Spinoza denies that miracles are even metaphysically possible,³⁰ Hobbes does not deny that they occur. He just cautions us to be wary of believing in any particular miracle:

Such is the ignorance and aptitude to error generally of all men (but especially of them that have not much knowledge of natural causes and of the nature and interests of men) as by innumerable and easy tricks to be abused. . . . If we look upon the impostures wrought by confederacy, there is nothing how impossible soever to be done, that is impossible to be believed. For two men conspiring, one to seem lame, the other to cure him with a charm, will deceive many; but many conspiring, one to seem lame, another so to cure him, and all the rest to bear witness, will deceive many more.³¹

Though Hobbes's argument here – like Hume's and unlike Spinoza's – is epistemological rather than metaphysical, he does anticipate Spinoza insofar as he suggests that someone who understood natural causes would be much less easily taken in by false tales of miracles.

Spinoza's views on immortality are more difficult to work out. Early in the *Ethics* he says that mind and body are one and the

same thing, conceived under different attributes (II, Prop. 21, Schol.), which would seem to entail that the mind must die with the body. Later he says that there is *something* of the mind that is not destroyed with the body, but is eternal (V, Prop. 23). But whatever part of the mind is eternal – apparently it is the part that has intellectual knowledge of God or Nature – lacks any memory of a life in the body. Since Spinoza makes memory essential to personal identity (IV, Prop. 39, Schol.), this entails a denial of personal immortality. Spinoza construes hell as something lived here on earth, when we are subject to such passions as sadness, despair, envy, terror, and the like.³² Hobbes does not deny immortality. But consistently with his materialism, he conceives of the life eternal as enjoyed, not by an immaterial soul, but by a resurrected body, which will live in a terrestrial paradise (*Lev.*, xxxviii, 1–5, 238–42/301–5). The wicked do not have eternal life and are not punished for eternity. After their ‘first death’, they are punished, but not forever. When they have suffered enough, they die a ‘second death’ (i.e., are annihilated).³³

Among Hobbes’s many affinities with Spinoza, one of the most important is his role in the emerging science of biblical criticism.³⁴ Not only does Hobbes anticipate Spinoza in denying the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, he also anticipates his view that *all* the books of the Old Testament were compiled many centuries after the events they describe. He even anticipates Spinoza in identifying the post-exilic priest, Ezra, as the person who probably put the central historical books of the Bible into the form in which we have received them (*Lev.*, xxxiii, 19, 203/255–6). But Hobbes is not as bold as Spinoza in the conclusions he explicitly draws from his biblical criticism. Nowhere does he write anything as blunt as Spinoza’s claim that ‘the word of God is faulty, mutilated, corrupted and inconsistent, that we have only fragments of it, and that the original text of the covenant God made with the Jews has been lost’.³⁵ Indeed, Hobbes makes a point of denying that the temporal gap between the events recorded and the earliest surviving records of those events casts doubt on the records’ accuracy: ‘I see not therefore any reason to doubt but that the Old and the New Testaments, as we have them now, are the true registers of those things which were said and done by the prophets and apostles’ (*Lev.*, xxxiii, 20, 204/257). But his grounds for this conclusion are odd.

Hobbes acknowledges that the interval between the events recorded and the texts describing those events is not as great in the

case of the New Testament books as it is in the case of the Old. The authors of the New Testament books all lived in the age of the apostles (i.e., in the mid-first century). But then he observes that there *was* a significant temporal gap between the writing of the New Testament books and their inclusion in the canon, that is, the authoritative determination of their sacred status and their official recommendation to Christian congregations. He dates their acceptance as canonical as having occurred near the end of the fourth century. During that gap there were only a few copies of the works available, and they were in the hands of ambitious priests, who wished to exercise control over the emperors and were willing to use pious fraud to gain that control. But although these priests had both the motive and the opportunity to alter the texts to their liking, Hobbes writes,

I am persuaded they did not therefore falsify the Scriptures (though the copies of the books of the New Testament were in the hands only of the ecclesiastics), because if they had had an intention to do so, they would surely have made them more favourable to their power over Christian princes and civil sovereignty than they are. (xxxiii, 20, 204/257)

In “‘I Durst Not Write So Boldly’” (p. 569) I argued that Hobbes was being ironic here. He put together an argument that we might naturally think led to one conclusion – that our present texts of the Old and New Testaments *do not* provide a reliable record of the things said and done by the prophets and apostles – but then denied that conclusion, for reasons we should not find, and are not expected to find, convincing. I called this ‘suggestion by disavowal’. The author suggests a heretical conclusion but avoids having to take responsibility for it by giving us bad reasons for denying that it follows from his premises. A general skepticism about the accuracy of Scripture as a record of what the prophets and apostles said and did would serve Hobbes’s purposes by diminishing the authority of Scripture as a basis for belief, thereby weakening a principal ground alleged for disobedience to the sovereign. Moreover, since scriptural texts affirming the necessity of correct belief for salvation – like John 3:16–18 – are also a crucial part of the case for punishing heresy, diminishing the authority of Scripture also serves the cause of religious toleration.

One reason I thought Hobbes was being ironic was that his professed reason for accepting the counterconclusion (i.e., for thinking

that the present texts of the Old and New Testaments *do* provide a reliable record of the events they describe) was patently insufficient to support that conclusion. Is deliberate alteration of the text the only way error could have crept in? Might not the scientific ignorance or credulity of the authors have led them to treat as miraculous events that had a natural explanation? And even if the priests who preserved the texts of the *New* Testament did not deliberately alter them to make them more favorable to their temporal power, what assurance does that give us that those who were responsible for writing and transmitting the texts of the *Old* Testament gave us a true register of what happened many centuries before they wrote? The fact that one group of priests did not alter the texts in their care does nothing to show that another group of priests, who had the disadvantage of living long after the events their texts described, were both able and willing to transmit an accurate account of those events.

Recently Noel Malcolm has considered the possibility of interpreting this passage ironically, and cautioned that we cannot decide, on the basis of this passage alone, what Hobbes's intentions are. He notes that Bellarmine had used a similar argument against the possibility that the rabbis had corrupted the text of the Old Testament. 'If they had wished to falsify the holy Scriptures out of hostility to the Christians', Bellarmine wrote, 'they would doubtless have removed the main prophecies [of the Messiah]'.³⁶ No one would accuse Bellarmine here of suggestion by disavowal. Malcolm does not flatly reject the ironic interpretation, but suggests that if we accept it, we must do so on the basis of larger contextual considerations, such as Hobbes's 'naturalistic treatment of miracles and prophecy, and his epistemological blocking of any transmission of divine revelation from one human being to another'. Malcolm's caution is judicious. I would agree that these contextual considerations are very helpful in, and perhaps necessary for, determining the meaning of this passage. But a dogged defender of a nonironic interpretation of the text is apt to question our interpretation of the passages about miracles, prophecy and revelation too. So it may be useful to see what more can be mined from this passage.

We might begin by noting one disanalogy between Bellarmine's argument and Hobbes's. Many copies of the Hebrew Bible, not only in the original language, but also in Greek translation, were circulating

by the time the Christians became a force the rabbis had to contend with. So it would not have been as easy for the rabbis to falsify their Scriptures as Hobbes insists it was for the Christian clerics. (This weakens Bellarmine's argument. Does it strengthen Hobbes's?) Moreover, Hobbes's argument should raise the following question in the minds of critical readers: if the priests had the motive and the opportunity to falsify the texts, what stopped them from doing so? We might have hoped that they would have been inhibited by moral scruples about tampering with the word of God. But Hobbes has blocked that response in advance by telling us that these priests 'thought such frauds as tended to make the people more obedient to Christian doctrine to be pious'.

Hobbes cites no evidence for this claim, but if challenged to do so, he might have offered the example of the 'Johannine comma', that variation of 1 John 5:7–8, which imports a clear statement of the doctrine of the Trinity – the *only* clear statement of that doctrine in the New Testament – into a passage that evidently did not originally contain it. In the sixteenth century Erasmus had created an uproar when he omitted the Johannine comma from the first printed edition of the Greek New Testament, on the ground that he did not find it in the Greek manuscripts available to him. When critics protested the omission, Erasmus offered to restore the passage if someone could show him a Greek manuscript that contained it. A manuscript containing it was accordingly produced, and in subsequent editions of the New Testament Erasmus restored the passage, though his annotation expressed doubts about the authenticity of the new manuscript. And indeed, it is now generally regarded as a forgery, produced for the occasion.³⁷ Given Hobbes's intense interest in the doctrine of the Trinity, it seems likely that he would have known about this case, though he does not challenge the authenticity of the Johannine comma when he discusses it in chapter xlii of *Leviathan*, preferring instead to interpret it in a way consistent with his position on the Trinity.³⁸

Reflection on this case also points up another weakness in Hobbes's argument for his counterconclusion: when the priests transmitted the text, they might have been more concerned with theological issues than with claiming authority over rulers. As we have learned since Hobbes's day, there are numerous examples where

the texts of our earliest manuscripts of the New Testament seem to have been deliberately altered to make them favor one side over another in the disputes about Jesus' nature which bitterly divided his followers in the first centuries after his death.³⁹ At least by the time he wrote the Latin *Leviathan* Hobbes was well informed about the many 'heresies' in the early church, and knew that the term *heresy* (*hairesis*) did not acquire its pejorative meaning until after the early church councils defined what orthodoxy comprised.⁴⁰

An ironic reading of Hobbes's conclusion thus seems to me perfectly in order, although I would not dream of imputing irony to the similar argument in Bellarmine. What makes the difference? Certainly context is important. Hobbes is an author in whom we frequently find passages that seem to flirt with heresy, if they do not embrace it outright.⁴¹ Bellarmine is not. But the contemporary reception of Hobbes is also important. Most of his contemporaries thought Hobbes was highly unorthodox. We need to be able to account for that reaction. A reading of Hobbes that acknowledges his frequent use of irony helps us to do so.

One important affinity Hobbes had with Spinoza and other authors of the radical Enlightenment is that he did 'scorn all forms of ecclesiastical authority'. Aubrey quotes a suggestive remark made to him by Edmund Waller: 'that what was chiefly to be taken notice of in [Hobbes's] elegy was that he, being but one, and a private person, pulled down all the churches, dispelled the mists of ignorance, and laid open their priestcraft'.⁴² No doubt Waller exaggerated Hobbes's actual accomplishments when he said that. Hobbes did not in his own time succeed in dramatically weakening the political power of authoritarian religion, though he may in the long run have contributed significantly to weakening it. But I do not think he much exaggerated Hobbes's goals. As we shall see, Hobbes is not opposed to all churches, in the most general sense of the term 'church'. But he is opposed to churches that claim to exercise authority over us, churches that make a sharp distinction between the laity and the clergy, and whose clergy, in virtue of their presumed superior knowledge of spiritual matters, claim the right to issue decrees it is unjust to disobey, independently of the decrees of the sovereign.⁴³ It is these churches that pose a threat to the authority of the sovereign, and it is these churches that must be 'pulled down'.

This agenda is most evident in Part IV of *Leviathan*, titled 'The Kingdom of Darkness'. Hobbes defines the kingdom of darkness as 'a confederacy of deceivers that, to obtain dominion over men in this present world, endeavor by dark and erroneous doctrines to extinguish in them the light, both of nature and of the gospel, and so to disprepare them for the kingdom of God to come' (*Lev.*, xliv, 1, 333/411). Hobbes also refers to the kingdom of darkness as the kingdom of Satan and says that the darkest part of it consists of those who reject Christ. He offers no evidence to suggest that *non*-Christians are conspiring among themselves to obtain dominion over Christians. The members of this confederacy of deceivers whom he thinks most dangerous – if we may judge by the attention he gives them – are the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, whose Pope claims, as Christ's vicar on earth, a right to the obedience of all Christians (whether Catholic or not), a right, through his bishops, to crown kings (*Lev.*, xliv, 6–9, 335–7/413–15), and a right to release subjects from their obligation to obey their king, if he is not diligent in purging his country of heretics (*Lev.*, xliv, 6–9, 335–7/413–15).

Still, it would be a mistake to think that Hobbes's polemic against the kingdom of darkness has only the Catholic Church as its target. Though he devotes what some readers may feel is an inordinate amount of space in books III and IV of *Leviathan* to his campaign against that church, he also makes it clear that he finds the Presbyterian clergy equally obnoxious: 'The Presbytery hath challenged [i.e., claimed] the power to excommunicate their own kings, and to be the supreme moderators in religion, in the places where they have that form of Church government, no less than the Pope challengeth it universally' (*Lev.*, xliv, 17, 340–1/420–1). An attack on Presbyterianism was not only an attack on the Church of Scotland. In 1647 the Westminster Assembly had approved and in 1648 Parliament had ratified a common confession, intended to unite the Christian churches of England, Scotland and Ireland.⁴⁴ Although the political power of the Presbyterians declined sharply after Pride's Purge in December 1648, the Church of England itself still contained many Presbyterians.⁴⁵

Hobbes's fierce anticlericalism is not news, of course. But we may not appreciate its relevance to the problem of religious toleration. Hobbes views the clergy as an inherent threat, not only to the authority of the king, but also to religious liberty. Clerics may be

men of God, but they are still men, and one thing Hobbes thinks is common to all men is 'a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, which ceaseth only in death' (*Lev.*, xi, 2, 47/58). If we consider power in its broadest sense, as the present means to obtain some future apparent good (*Lev.*, x, 1, 41/50), there is nothing inherently wrong with the desire for power. It is only rational to desire the means to whatever else you may desire. But people do not differ greatly in their natural ability to get what they want (*Lev.*, xiii, 1, 60/74). Significant differences of power arise only when some men are able to use their natural power to get others to do their bidding, acquiring thereby a kind of power Hobbes calls 'instrumental' (*Lev.*, x, 2-3, 41/50). Because people may differ greatly in their degree of instrumental power, it can be much more dangerous than natural power.

The clergy are particularly well placed to acquire instrumental power. For another common feature of human nature is our ignorance of natural causes and, in particular, of the causes of our good or ill fortune (*Lev.*, xii, 1-6, 52/63-4). This ignorance makes us anxious about the future (*Lev.*, xii, 5, 52/63-4), credulous (*Lev.*, xi, 23, 51/62) and thus prone to take things that happen accidentally as good or evil omens. It disposes us to trust those who can plausibly claim the power to foresee the future and to assist us in realizing our goals (*Lev.*, xii, 10, 54/66). These human weaknesses are among the 'natural seeds' of religion, which Hobbes defines as a 'fear of invisible powers, feigned by the mind, or imagined from tales publicly allowed' (*Lev.*, vi, 36, 26/31). These natural seeds of religion would not have blossomed into the organized religions we find around us if there had not been men who cultivated them (*Lev.*, xii, 12, 54/67). Hobbes allows that some of these men – the founders of the true religion – cultivated the seeds of religion at God's direction. Others – the founders of the pagan religions – were acting on their own. But both sorts of men, he contends, were motivated by a desire to make their fellow men more obedient. More obedient to whom or what? The English version of *Leviathan* attributes an apparently benign motive to the founders of religions: 'Both sorts have done it with a purpose to make those men that relied on them the more apt to obedience, laws, peace, charity, and civil society'. The Latin version says, less amiably, that they have done it to make 'their initiates more obedient to themselves'.

It is not surprising, then, that when Hobbes comes to analyze the motivations that underlie the kingdom of darkness, he fixes on the desire for power:

In those places where the Presbytery took that office [of administering the government of religion], though many other doctrines of the Church of Rome were forbidden to be taught, yet this doctrine (that the kingdom of Christ is already come, and that it began at the resurrection of our Saviour) was still retained. But *cui bono*? What profit did they expect from it? The same which the Popes expected: to have a sovereign power over the people. (*Lev.*, xlvii, 4, 382/478)

There is a similar warning in Hobbes's discussion of prophecy:

Men had need to be very circumspect and wary in obeying the voice of man that, pretending himself to be a prophet, requires us to obey God in that way which he in God's name telleth us to be the way to happiness.⁴⁶ For he that pretends [i.e., claims] to teach men the way of so great felicity pretends to govern them (that is to say, to rule and reign over them), which is a thing that all men naturally desire, and is therefore worthy to be suspected of ambition and imposture, and consequently ought to be examined and tried by every man before he yield them obedience. (*Lev.*, xxxvi, 19, 230/290)

Hobbes does not, of course, deny that prophecy has occurred. He just warns us to be suspicious of anyone who claims to be a prophet. And his reasoning would apply equally to any minister who claimed to be able to tell us the way to salvation.

Hobbes's suspicion of the clergy has clear implications for the Scriptures on which they base their authority. In his discussion of faith earlier in *Leviathan* Hobbes had written: 'When we believe that the Scriptures are the word of God, having no immediate revelation from God himself, our belief, faith and trust is in the church, whose word we take, and acquiesce therein' (*Lev.*, vii, 7, 32/37). It seems reasonable to infer from this that if we cannot trust the clergy, we cannot trust that Scriptures are the word of God. That Hobbes affirmed the antecedent of this conditional can hardly be doubted.

Earlier I said I did not think Hobbes wanted to 'pull down' *all* the churches. My evidence for this is a remarkable passage toward the end of the last chapter of *Leviathan*, where Hobbes gives an abridged history of the Christian religion, with an emphasis on the problem of religious liberty. In the beginning, he says, the people obeyed the apostles out of reverence for their wisdom, humility, sincerity and other virtues, not out of obligation. 'Their consciences were free, and

their words and actions were subject to none but the civil power' (*Lev.*, xvlii, 19, 384/481). But as the religion grew, the presbyters (i.e., the leaders of the various groups of Christians), encountering disagreement about fundamentals of the Christian message, felt the need to settle on a uniform doctrine they would all agree to teach, which they would expect their flocks to obey, on pain of excommunication. This, Hobbes says, was 'the first knot upon their liberty'. Then as the number of presbyters grew, the presbyters in the chief cities persuaded their provincial colleagues to accept their authority, and took for themselves the title of bishop. 'This was the second knot on Christian liberty'. The final step was for the bishop of Rome, the imperial city, with the assistance of the emperor, to acquire authority over all the bishops of the empire. This 'was the third and last knot, and the whole synthesis and construction of the pontifical power'.

Hobbes claims that the early history of the church has been replayed in reverse in the history of England since the Reformation:

First the power of the Popes was dissolved totally by Queen Elizabeth, and the bishops, who before exercised their functions in the right of the Pope, did afterwards exercise the same in right of the Queen and her successors.... And so was untied the first knot. After this the Presbyterians lately in England obtained the putting down of the episcopacy. And so was the second knot dissolved. And almost at the same time the power was taken also from the Presbyterians.⁴⁷ And so we are reduced to the independency of the primitive Christians, to follow Paul, or Cephas, or Apollos, every man as he liketh best. Which, if it be without contention, and without measuring the doctrine of Christ by our affection to the person of his minister, ... is perhaps the best.⁴⁸

Tuck describes this passage as 'the most passionate defense of toleration to be found in the book'. I think it constitutes his best evidence for regarding the English *Leviathan* as a defence of toleration. But when we take it together with the many other passages in which Hobbes emphasizes the need for the sovereign to have the authority to control people's utterances and actions, and to try to control their opinions, the overall evidence suggests a more nuanced verdict: that the English *Leviathan* is more favorable to toleration than it might appear, though not, on the whole, so favorable as the Latin *Leviathan*.

The passage under consideration (*Lev.*, xlvii, 20, 385/481-2), which Hobbes omitted from the Latin *Leviathan*, probably because

it looked, after the Restoration, uncomfortably like support for Cromwell, continues by explaining that the independency of the primitive Christians is 'perhaps the best' because

there ought to be no power over the consciences of men but of the Word itself, working faith in every one, not always according to the purpose of them that plant and water, but of God himself, that giveth increase. And . . . because it is unreasonable (in them who teach there is such danger in every little error) to require of a man endued with reason of his own, to follow the reason of any other man, or of the most voices of many other men (which is little better than to venture his salvation at cross and pile).

Locke could hardly have said it better. At moments like this Hobbes does indeed sound like a saint of liberalism.

Hobbes does not want to pull down *all* the churches, just the ones that seek to dictate to their members what they should believe and how they should act. Part of his way of doing that is to challenge the standard interpretations of the scriptural texts on which they base their claims to authority. Part of his way is to sow doubt about the authority of Scripture itself. But the part of his procedure I have concentrated on here is his debunking analysis of the psychology that leads some men to seek authority over others, and others to be foolish enough to give it to them. When he is in that mode, Hobbes acts like a card-carrying member of the radical Enlightenment, bent on destroying the influence of a clergy whose access to wealth, honor and power depends on their being widely perceived as godly men, who have a special insight into saving truths and only the good of their flocks at heart. With Voltaire, he says: 'Ecrasez l'infâme'.

To the extent that Hobbes had that project, and succeeded in it, he served the cause of religious toleration. Wherever there is a clergy, in the sense relevant here – a politically powerful group of men, whose power depends on their ability to persuade their fellow men that they have a privileged access to religious truth, which they can use to help their fellow men attain the greatest possible good, and avoid the worst possible evil – wherever there is a clergy in that sense, there is a force that has a strong incentive to work against religious liberty and is thus very apt to pose an obstacle to liberty. Diminishing the power of such a clergy removes that obstacle.

Those who have a more benign view of the clergy than Hobbes did, and are less willing than he for secular rulers to have unchecked

power, may object that it is often useful for there to be a force in society which can oppose them. When I presented this paper in Washington, Mary Keys observed that the Catholic Church had played a valuable role in ending the communist domination of Poland. I am sure there are many other cases where organized religion has been a force for good in politics. Whether there are many cases where the power of organized religion has advanced the cause of religious liberty is another matter, about which I am not so sanguine.

NOTES

1. The phrase is Alan Ryan's. See his 'A more tolerant Hobbes', in *Justifying Toleration*, ed. by Susan Mendus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Ryan had previously explored issues relating to Hobbes and toleration in 'Hobbes, toleration and the inner life', in *The Nature of Political Theory*, ed. by David Miller and Larry Seidentop (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).
2. But not as thoroughgoing a separation as some Americans might think their constitutional tradition requires. As Maurice Cranston has pointed out ('John Locke and the Case for Toleration', in *On Toleration*, ed. by Susan Mendus and David Edwards [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987]), although Locke says that 'the church is absolutely separate and distinct from the commonwealth and civil affairs', he has no objection to – indeed, assumes that there will be – a state church, and that the state will use persuasion to 'draw the heterodox to truth'. He objects only to the state's use of commands backed by the threat of force. See John Locke, *Epistola de Tolerantia, A Letter on Toleration*, ed. by Raymond Klibansky, trans. by J. W. Gough (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 69, 85.
3. *Lev.*, xviii, 9 (91/113–14); xxix, 6–8 (168–9/212–13); xxx, 2–14 (175–80/219–26).
4. In each case Hobbes seems to reject the teaching of St. Paul: 'By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not the result of works, so that no one may boast' (Ephesians 2:8). 'When the Gentiles, who do not possess the law, do instinctively what the law requires, these, though not having the law, are a law unto themselves. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, to which their own conscience bears witness; and their conflicting thoughts will accuse or perhaps excuse them on the day when, according to my gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all' (Romans 2:14–16).
5. In the articles cited in n. 2.

6. See Hobbes's explanation of why Constantine and the other Roman emperors found it necessary to establish many penalties against heretics, in the Latin *Leviathan*, Appendix ii, 44 (Curley edn, 531).
7. See *Lev.*, xl, 2 (249–50/317–18); xlii, 43 (285/354); xlv, 37 (378/466); Latin *Leviathan*, Appendix ii, 64 (Curley edn, 536).
8. *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*, ed. by Ferdinand Tönnies (2nd ed., London: Frank Cass, 1969), II, ix, 4.
9. *Behemoth*, ed. by Stephen Holmes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 62.
10. See *Behemoth*, Holmes ed., 61–2, 73.
11. See his 'Hobbes and Locke on Toleration', in *Thomas Hobbes and Political Theory*, ed. by Mary G. Dietz (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990), 153–71. Tuck, however, draws a sharp distinction between the Hobbes of *Leviathan* and the Hobbes of *De Cive*, which he claims is 'a defense of religious repression' (p. 165).
12. For example, Latin *Leviathan*, Appendix ii, 57–64 (Curley edn, 535–6).
13. Latin *Leviathan*, Appendix i, 104 (Curley edn, 520–1).
14. Hobbes discusses the parable of the weeds in the wheat in the Latin Appendix ii, 66 (Curley edn, 536–7). This parable was a staple of the argument for toleration in the early modern period. See my 'Sebastian Castellio's Erasmian Liberalism', *Philosophical Topics*, 31 (2004): 47–73.
15. In his 'Essay on Toleration', written in 1667, but not published until the nineteenth century. Locke's earlier *Two Tracts on Government* (1660, 1662), written before his association with Shaftesbury, had defended the right of rulers to impose the use of indifferent things (i.e., things neither commanded nor forbidden by God) in religious worship. For these texts see David Wootton's edition of Locke's *Political Writings* (New York: Mentor, 1993). In his introduction Wootton suggests that by 1667 Locke may have been persuaded by the failure of the Clarendon Code, which attached severe civil disabilities to nonconformity, that it was impossible to enforce religious uniformity. The 'Essay on Toleration' anticipates the doctrine of separation Locke was to defend in his better known *Epistola de tolerantia* of 1685.
16. John Aubrey, *Brief Lives, Chiefly of Contemporaries*, ed. by Andrew Clark (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), I, 339.
17. *Leviathan* itself, however, was burned at Oxford in 1683. See Patricia Springborg, 'Hobbes, Heresy and the *Historia Ecclesiastica*', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 55 (1994): 556.
18. Hobbes had argued for this distinction between the imperatives of the Old Testament (genuine commands and therefore, since they came from one having the appropriate authority, laws) and those of the New (merely counsel and hence not laws) in *Lev.*, xxv, 1–11 (131–4/165–9).

19. In my 'Sebastian Castellio's Erasmian Liberalism'.
20. For Aquinas see *Summa theologiae* II-II, qu. 11, art. 3. For Calvin see his *The Defense of the Orthodox Faith* (1554). So both Aquinas and Calvin would have had a ready reply to the Lockean objection that because a saving faith must be voluntary, it is not possible to coerce someone into being saved. I discuss both these passages in 'Sebastian Castellio's Erasmian Liberalism'.
21. *Radical Enlightenment, Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
22. In this, I agree with Noel Malcolm's criticism of Israel in his *Aspects of Hobbes*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 535–7, and with at least part of the more wide-ranging criticism which Patricia Springborg has made of Israel's work in her review of Malcolm in the *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 12 (2004): 513–34.
23. That Hobbes was *covertly* either an atheist or a deist was the thesis of my "'I Durst Not Write So Boldly," or How to Read Hobbes's Theological-Political Treatise', in *Hobbes e Spinoza*, ed. by Daniela Bostrenghi (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1992). (By 'deist' I understand a monotheist who believes that God has not revealed himself to man either directly or through any set of scriptures.) I take Hobbes's professions of orthodoxy to be a nonculpable deception which the religious intolerance of his day required him to adopt, if he was to sow doubt about the dominant religious beliefs, as I think he meant to do. The quotation in the title of this article is taken from Aubrey's report of Hobbes's reaction to reading Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Philosophicus*. For the context of the quote, see the excerpt from Aubrey's life of Hobbes in the Curley edition of *Leviathan*, p. lxviii, which I believe gives a more accurate version of Aubrey's report than the one printed in Clark's edition of *Brief Lives*. In personal communication Israel tells me that he has subsequently modified his reading of Hobbes's religious views, in response both to my work and to criticisms from Noel Malcolm and Kinch Hoekstra. He now thinks he was inclined to take Hobbes's statements about religion too literally when he dismissed him as a radical Enlightenment figure.
24. In the seventeenth century Henry Oldenburg seems not to have realized, from a reading of the *Theological-Political Treatise*, just how radical Spinoza's thought was. See my 'Homo Audax: Leibniz, Oldenburg and the *Theological-Political Treatise*', in *Studia Leibnitiana*, supp. 1991. For a more recent example, see Graeme Hunter's *Radical Protestantism in Spinoza's Thought* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).
25. *De corpore* xxvi, 1, in Hobbes, *Opera Latina*, ed. by William Molesworth, I, 337 (orig. published in London in 1839, reprinted in 1966 by

- Scientia Verlag, Aalen, Germany). My translation. Hobbes criticizes arguments against the eternity of the world on similar grounds in his *Thomas White's DE MUNDO Examined*, trans. by Harold Whitmore Jones (Bradford: Bradford University Press, 1976), ch. 28. The topic recurs in the Appendix to the Latin *Leviathan*, ch. i. On this see Patricia Springborg's analysis in her 'Hobbes and Epicurean Religion', in *Der Garten und die Moderne: Epikureische Moral und Politik vom Humanismus bis zur Aufklärung*, ed. by Gianni Paganini and Edoardo Tortarolo (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Rommann-holzboog Verlag, 2004), 161–214. Gianni Paganini has also explored Hobbes's relationship to Epicureanism in his 'Hobbes, Gassendi, and the Tradition of Political Epicureanism', in *Hobbes Studies*, 14 (2001): 3–24.
26. The passage from *De corpore* is complex. For further discussion see 'I Durst Not Write So Boldly', 572–82.
 27. For further discussion of these issues see my 'The Covenant with God in Hobbes's *Leviathan*', in *Leviathan after 350 Years*, ed. by Tom Sorell and Luc Foisneau (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004).
 28. *Lev.*, xxxi, 13, 190/239. In the Latin *Leviathan* Hobbes softens the English *Leviathan*'s blunt statement that God has no ends: 'But I see no end on account of which God omnipotent might wish himself to be worshipped, except that it might benefit us'. Hobbes, *Opera Latina*, ed. by W. Molesworth (London: J. Bohn, 1841), 259.
 29. Briefly, the argument is that on Hobbes's definition of a command (*Lev.*, xxv, 2, 131–2/165–6), someone who commands something does so for his own benefit. And on Hobbes's definition of law (*Lev.*, xxvi, 2, 137/173), law is a command addressed to someone previously obliged to obey the commander. But if God has no ends, he cannot act for his own benefit, and so cannot issue commands, and so cannot be a lawgiver. For further discussion see my 'Religion and Morality in Hobbes', in *Rational Commitment and Social Justice, Essays for Gregory Kavka*, ed. by Jules Coleman and Christopher Morris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 102–5.
 30. In the *Theological-Political Treatise*, ch. 6. Part of Spinoza's argument is that, since God is normally thought to have been the author of the laws of nature, he would be acting contrary to his own will if he interfered with the operation of those laws.
 31. *Lev.*, xxxvii, 12, 236–7/298–9. The Latin reads 'two wicked men conspiring'.
 32. So far as I know, the only passage in which Spinoza discusses hell occurs in the *Short Treatise on God, Man and his Well-Being*, II, xviii, 6 (Spinoza, *Collected Works*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), I, 128.

33. *Lev.*, xxxviii, 6–14, 242–5/305–9; xlii, 14–16, 339–40/418–20; xlii, 27–9, 345–46/426–9. Hobbes also deals with the doctrine of eternal torment in the Appendix to the Latin *Leviathan* (i, 43–6, Curley edn, 506–7), where to his usual scriptural arguments he adds the claim that God's infinite mercy would enable him, without injustice, to remit the eternal punishment the wicked might deserve.
34. I have discussed the roles Hobbes and Spinoza played in this discipline in 'Notes on a Neglected Masterpiece (I): Spinoza and the Science of Hermeneutics', in *Spinoza, the Enduring Questions*, ed. by Graeme Hunter (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994). See also Noel Malcolm's 'Hobbes, Ezra and the Bible', in his *Aspects of Hobbes*.
35. *Theological-Political Treatise*, xii, 1 (Gebhardt edition, III, 158, my translation).
36. Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes*, 428.
37. For details, see Bruce Metzger and Bart Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament, Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration*, 4th edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), ch. iii, or Bart Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus, The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (San Francisco: Harper, 2005), 78–83.
38. See *Lev.*, xlii, 3, 267–9/334–6. Hobbes deleted this passage from the Latin edition of *Leviathan*, but returned to the topic in his Appendix, i, 87, Curley edn, 517. I pass over another notorious example of pious fraud, the so-called *Donation of Constantine*, unmasked by Lorenzo Valla in the fifteenth century. On Hobbes' relation to Valla, see Gianni Paganini's 'Thomas Hobbes e Lorenzo Valla,' *Rinascimento* 39 (1999): 515–68.
39. See Bart Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture, The Effects of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), or chapter 6 of his *Misquoting Jesus*.
40. See the Latin *Leviathan*, Appendix, ii, 1–26, Curley edn, 521–6.
41. Hobbes's treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity in the English *Leviathan* (e.g., in xvi, 12, 82/103; xxxiii, 20, 204–5/258–9; and xlii, 3, 267–8/334–6) would be an example of what I take to be a clear embrace of heresy, which required considerable backtracking in the Latin *Leviathan*. See the annotation in the Curley edition of the passages cited earlier and Hobbes's retraction in the Appendix, iii, 11–14, Curley edn, 543.
42. *Brief Lives*, I, 358. For Spinoza's similar view of the clergy, see the Preface to his *Theological-Political Treatise*.
43. See the Appendix to the Latin *Leviathan*, iii, 27–8, Curley edn, 545.

44. See Robert S. Paul, *The Assembly of the Lord, Politics and Religion in the Westminster Assembly and the 'Grand Debate'* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1985), 518.
45. John Moorman writes, of the period immediately following the execution of Charles, that 'the religious life of the country was in a state of great confusion. Since the abolition of episcopacy there had been no proper organization or control. Most of the incumbents were Presbyterians, but a number were Anglicans at heart, who conformed under protest, and a few were Independents. All that the government could do was to issue an order in 1650 to say that everyone must attend some place of worship or a place where religious exercises were held; but that meant very little'. *A History of the Church in England* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1954), 243-4.
46. The Latin *Leviathan* here reads: 'the way to eternal salvation'. Curley edn, 290.
47. A reference, I take it, to the expulsion of the Presbyterian members from the House of Commons in Pride's Purge, December 1648.
48. *Lev.*, xlvii, 20 (385/481-2). For the sake of readability, I omit, in the first ellipsis, a significant parenthetical remark: 'though by retaining the phrase of *jure divino*, they were thought to demand it by immediate right from God'. Hobbes is understating matters here. Not only were the bishops *thought to* demand their authority 'by immediate right from God', they *did* so demand it. And Hobbes knew this at least by the time he wrote *Behemoth*. See pp. 56-7 in the Holmes edition.

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14 Hobbes's Critique of the Doctrine of Essences and Its Sources

I. HOBBS'S CRITIQUE OF ARISTOTLE'S METAPHYSICS

In the *Appendix* to the Latin *Leviathan* published in 1668, Hobbes undertook a laborious interpretation of the Nicene Creed to show that his philosophy was not contrary to the 'orthodox' doctrine of the Church as defined by the first four Ecumenical Councils. He also tried to demonstrate that, while meeting the criteria for proper rationality, it also corresponded more closely to the literal meaning of Holy Scripture. In what amounted to an exegetical and philosophical *tour de force*, Hobbes confronted a series of terms that had served to define theological doctrine but that also had a specific philosophical emphasis: the concepts hypostasis, essence, substance and entity. In order to define the meanings of these terms and the reciprocal relationships between them he was obliged to take a strong position on their thousand year history in metaphysics and theology; we must therefore admire the courage with which he tackled this problem. The passage in question concerns in particular the doctrine of essences and the presumed 'separate' existence of essences. Hobbes argues that the problem of abstraction is a semantic problem: 'abstracts are the problem of abstractions when they are thought of separately from the other names of the same object'.¹

If you understand these matters rightly, you understand that it is also impossible for the essence of any entity to exist separated from the entity itself, as if there might be a white object where there is no whiteness, or whiteness where there is no white object, or man where there is no humanity. You also know that Aristotle is wrong in asserting, 'some essences exist separated from the entities whose essences they are'. And you realize that the soul is thus neither, as he asserts, the essence of a living being, nor is it existent

when the being has died. You see that Aristotle erred *per consequens* in that he did not distinguish between separate things and separate considerations of things.

This paragraph refers to Chapter xlvi of *Leviathan*, which deals at length with the 'Errors brought into Religion from Aristotles Metaphysiques' and above all with the origins of 'Schoole Divinity', that is the doctrine whereby 'wee are told, there be in the world certaine Essences separated from Bodies, which they [i.e., the Schoolmen] call *Abstract Essences, and Substantiall Formes*'. The text of *Leviathan* makes short work of rejecting these ideas. Hobbes first stresses the equivalence between substances and bodies ('The World... is Corporeall'), from which he deduces that also 'Spirits', if they exist, are not 'nothing' but 'have dimensions, and are therefore really *Bodies*' though they be different from the ordinary bodies that appear as 'visible, or palpable'. He then analyses the process whereby 'abstractions' (abstract nouns) are formed that appear to have no reference to corporeality, and proceeds to classify 'Words' by dividing them into three groups depending on their different denotations: some are 'the names of the Things conceived', which have left 'an Impression in the Imagination'; others are the 'names of the Imaginations themselves', and others again are 'names of Names, or of different sorts of Speech'. Included among the latter 'words' is the copula 'is' (and its Greek and Latin equivalents), which simply indicates 'the Consequence, or Repugnance of one name to another'. Reasoning might even do without it and possibly – Hobbes hypothesizes – peoples may exist whose languages lack it. Moreover, it is certain that without the copula 'these Terms, of *Entity, Essentiall, Essentiality*, that are derived from it' would also cease to exist. These words do not denote 'things', but 'Signes, by which wee make known, that wee conceive the Consequence of one name or Attribute to another'. Hence nominal predicates in the infinitive (such as 'to bee a Body') and the abstract nouns corresponding to them (e.g., 'Corporeity'), 'are the names of *Nothing*'.² Thanks to this doctrine, Hobbes says, the 'demonology of the Greeks' spread to the Christian Church.

This doctrine '*de essentiis et formis substantialibus separatis*' is also refuted in the Latin *Leviathan*, Chapter xlvi, but in a much shorter space than in the English text.³ In truth, the chapter in the English *Leviathan* is elliptical enough on these questions, discussing

at much greater length the motives behind 'this doctrine of *Separated Essences*, built on the vain Philosophy of Aristotle'. The motives are 'political', Hobbes surmises. Through their teachings on separate essences and on incorporeal souls, phantoms and occult qualities, the scholastics conjured up the existence of a 'spiritual' kingdom, already present in this world and thus superior to the 'political' kingdom of the sovereign; the ultimate goal of scholastic philosophy being to distract citizens 'from Obeying the Laws of their Countrey, with empty names'.⁴

Chapter xlvi thus gives us very clearly to understand that the politics of *Leviathan* requires a metaphysical foundation radically different from Aristotelianism. Indeed, Hobbes's criticism of Aristotle is very forthright. Nothing more 'absurd' than his metaphysics is to be found in philosophy, nothing 'more repugnant to Government' than his politics, or more 'ignorant' than his ethics. The philosophy taught in the universities is then demolished with the contemptuous term 'Aristotelity'. However, it is true that elsewhere, employing a classic 'libertine' stratagem, Hobbes allows us to glimpse a more positive, almost a nonconformist, view of Aristotle. Aware that his doctrine of 'Entities' and 'Essences' was none other than 'false Philosophy', the Stagyrte, according to this view, nevertheless made every effort to sustain it because he thought of it as 'a thing consonant to, and corroborative of their [the Greeks'] Religion'. In other words, Aristotle above all 'fear[ed] the fate of Socrates'.⁵ He feared that he, too, would be accused and condemned for proposing doctrines against the gods of the *polis*.

Behind Hobbes's reference to an occult and dissimulating Aristotle lay the view of him elaborated by his 'radical' Renaissance followers. Although the ambiguous formulations of Aristotle concerning the intellectual soul appeared to favour the idea of its separability and consequent immortality, later Aristotelians like Pomponazzi had nevertheless noticed that the entire structure of Aristotle's thought pointed in the opposite direction, and had thus confirmed the mortality of the soul and its character as 'actus corporis organici'. Pomponazzi's position thus projected an awareness of the conflict always latent between philosophy and religion, onto Aristotle and the question of corporeality. In addition, he stressed the need to interpret Aristotle's thought through a filter that takes account of the veils and compromises with which every philosopher is forced to protect

himself, so as not to enter into direct conflict with the religious laws. This method of interpretation (which represents a form of Strauss's 'reading between the lines') was adopted also by the French school of erudite libertines (completely ignored, however, by Strauss). We find it again in Naudé and La Mothe le Vayer, the latter known personally to Hobbes. This exegesis, lastly, was to enter into the circuits of clandestine critique, where it was clearly represented by *Theophrastus redivivus*, around the middle of the seventeenth century; a work that took as its starting point, the substantial but concealed 'atheism' of Aristotle's philosophy, now freed from the compromises to which the Aristotelians had had to bow in order to live with the religious apparatus of the Church.⁶ It is important to note that the lesson from Socrates and philosophers' impossibility to openly profess their doctrine, dominate the initial pages of *Theophrastus redivivus*, based on texts by Cardano, Pomponazzi, Seneca and many other classical authors. And Hobbes too stressed the 'pagan' character of Aristotle.

2. 'OMNIS ILLA BARBARIES': HOBBS AND VALLA

The context for Hobbes's polemic was profoundly influenced by humanist attacks on the predominance of peripatetic philosophy, and above all its degeneration into scholasticism, as is clear in *Leviathan*. Hobbes concludes his examination of the 'darkness' to which 'false philosophy' had given rise by repeatedly stressing that the discourses of the 'Doctors of Schoole-Divinity' are 'nothing else for the most part, but insignificant Trainees of strange and barbarous words, or words otherwise used, then in the common use of the Latin tongue; such as would pose Cicero, and Varro, and all the Grammarians of ancient Rome'. Untranslatable into any modern language, their expressions are nothing other than 'Insignificancy of language'.⁷ And in *De corpore* Hobbes concentrates on the 'abuse' of 'abstract names' and in particular on the claim to 'speak of accidents, as though they could be separated from all bodies'. This is what had given rise to the 'gross errors of some metaphysicists', and above all to 'those terms without meaning: *substantiae abstractae, essentia separata*', as well as the abstract notions derived from the verb '*est*', such as '*essentia, essentialitas, entitas, entitativum*'. Hobbes concludes from this that there is no need for abstract words derived from the copula,

like the 'terms *essentia*, *entitas* and all those barbarous expressions (*omnisque illa barbaries*)'.⁸ Even the simple term '*barbaries*' clearly refers to a central theme of the humanist battle: the polemic against the distortion of classical language (Latin in this case), partly due to medieval ignorance but to an even greater extent due to the foolishness of a school of philosophy (scholasticism) that had used abstract and artificial terms to conceal their lack of meaning, or incomprehensibility.

Widely diffused throughout Hobbes's work, this type of polemic reaches its high point in the *Appendix* to the Latin *Leviathan* and in the *Historia ecclesiastica*, where he specifically criticises that mixture of scholastic philosophy and dogmatic theology that had produced a multiplication of terms, without any frame of rational or scriptural reference.⁹ This is a polemic that was common in the seventeenth century and espoused by all the *novatores*, who made more or less explicit reference to the previous generations of humanist-philosophers who had begun to free themselves from the Aristotelian 'yoke'. Among Hobbes's contemporaries and friends it is undoubtedly Gassendi who most explicitly indicates both his anti-Aristotelian polemical intent and his sources, the great Renaissance polemicists, among them Vives, Pierre de la Ramée, Gianfrancesco Pico, Sanchez and Charron.¹⁰ Aristotelian scholastic metaphysics were a 'science' whose impossibility and uselessness Gassendi denounces, above all in his *Exercitationes paradoxicae adversus Aristoteleos*, book I of which was published in 1624. Even in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries this theme was so widespread that it would be difficult to attribute it to any one author or precise line of thought. Indeed, the polemic even extended to Protestant authors such as Luther and Melanchthon, quoted and praised by Hobbes.

For the *topos*, '*barbaries*', however, we can be more specific. It has its point of origin in that manifesto of humanism that opens Lorenzo Valla's *Dialectica*, the dedicatory letter to Candido Decembrio, where Valla refers with disdain to the 'geese' that, during the middle ages, had taken the place of the 'swans' of classical times. Figures like Bartolo, Baldo, or Accursio 'did not speak Latin, but a barbaric language; they had no urbane civility of custom, rather a rough and rustic savagery'.¹¹ And 'barbarism' was not only a question of form but also of content – 'not the fronds of the trees, but the apples and the fruit'. In his later work, the *Elegantiae linguae latinae*, Valla went

on to stress what he saw as the dual value, philological and philosophical, of a return to the correct and meaningful use of the classical language, before the scholastic perversion. Thus, in a very well-known chapter, the humanist reproached the father of scholasticism, Boethius, for 'not knowing how to speak Roman' and not knowing that 'person' properly means 'quality, not substance, as Boethius wanted, who taught us to express ourselves in a barbarous fashion'. The way in which Hobbes was to present his interpretation of the dogma of the Trinity, finally freed from the contradictions he held to derive from the confusion between *personae* and *hypostaseis*, was not very different. Nevertheless, to appreciate the true stakes involved in the critique of the doctrine of essences, we should return to Hobbes's texts, and in particular to his critique of Thomas White.

3. 'LUCIANE UTINAM VIVERES!' A CRITICAL HISTORY OF 'ARISTOTELITY' IN HOBBS'S *DE MUTO*

The 'dialectical' and linguistic background for Hobbes's critique of essences is especially clear in his polemic against Thomas White's *De Mundo*. There, having stressed that '*ens*' entails '*corpus*', he goes on to examine the relationship existing between '*ens*' (as 'noun') and '*esse*' (as 'verb'), in particular in phrases containing nominal predicates. For normal predicates postulate that something 'happens' ('*accidit*') to the body, in such a way that it is 'conceived' differently. So 'it follows that *esse* is none other than an *accidens corporis*, whereby the way of conceiving it is determined and distinguished'. 'Beingness' is a property, or 'accident' of the body ('*Idem igitur est esse et accidens*'), meaning not the 'logical' accident of Porphyry's predicables but rather the 'physical' accident 'that opposed to substance'.¹² Hobbes warns that he is not considering 'accident' as it is numbered among the 'predicables' by Porphyry in *Isagoge*, but as it is called 'praedicamentale', namely inasmuch as it is opposed to substance. And here he shows he is aware of Porphyry's important revision of Aristotle's categories, for Porphyry had singled out five different ways (predicables) in which the predicate is attributed to the subject, in order to establish the nature of the link the copula 'is' puts between the subject and the predicate of the proposition. These five predicables are kind, species, difference, property and

accident. In his *De natura accidentis*, Aquinas drew further inferences from this revision of the table of the categories, distinguishing between the natural, physical (and metaphysical) meanings of the term, and the logical one (i.e., between the predicamental and the predicable). The former is opposed to the substance and contains nine kinds of accidents (corresponding to the last nine categories except substance), while the latter is one of the five universals, which Porphyry spoke about.¹³

'Much of philosophy' consists exactly in distinguishing whether a noun 'virtually' contains part of the verb 'to be' or not, that is whether it indicates a 'body' or an 'accident', Hobbes claimed in his criticism of White's *de Mundo*. The names of the accidents do not always include part of the verb 'to be'; it is frequently only implied, as in 'to live: = to be alive' ('*vivere: esse vivum*'), or in 'whiteness = to be white' ('*albedo: esse album*'). Nor is this purely a philological question, as is clearly shown by the very controversial case of light: 'he who knows whether the term *lumen* contains within it the term *esse* knows whether light is a body or an accident'. The 'beingness' ('*esse*') is called 'essence' (or sometimes also 'act', 'nature', or 'form') when 'from it the body receives its name'.¹⁴ This important classification into 'bodies' and 'accidents' represents to Hobbes an exhaustive 'division of things' affecting the whole of reality. It replaces the traditional classification of metaphysics, for 'ens' ('*tò ón*') and 'esse' ('*tò eínai*') between them comprehend the entire range of categories because within the first 'are contained all the things that exist, or that have existed or that will exist', whereas within the second lie the 'accidents' that is the 'ways in which bodies are conceived'. Hence, 'within *being*' are also included 'the natures of beings or entities, both the essences and the things that we say happen [*accidere*] or are inherent to the bodies'.

Hobbes says he derives this division into 'two classes' sometimes from Aristotle, other times from Plato.¹⁵ In reality, it is derived from neither, but from his own interpretation of 'first philosophy', understood as the '*scientia prima omnium de ente*' that contains 'the notion *toû óntos*, 'the commonest of all notions'. This 'first philosophy' defines 'the very common notions or names of all the beings and essences'. The word 'metaphysics' (coming *after* physics) can only be explained through the chronological or editorial ordering of the

books within Aristotle's *oeuvre*, and not with presumed reference to themes that go beyond (*trans*) nature. With this unexpected reevaluation of Aristotle, Hobbes claims that the Stagyrte was concerned 'to investigate all contents as far as possible using natural reason, without claiming to know anything of those things whose science *transcends nature*'. Incomprehensible doctrines, and the illusion of cultivating a '*doctrina transnaturalis*' or of 'going beyond the limits of nature', derived not from Aristotle himself, but from the errors of scholastic commentators. All of this ended up by causing the more solid and real sciences, such as physics and mathematics, to be disdained: 'those who profess metaphysics – Hobbes notes sarcastically – in reality know nothing, but wanting to appear more erudite than the others, disdain all other sciences'.¹⁶ Their mistakes required another Lucian, mocker of the philosophers, presumably Hobbes himself!¹⁷

The decisive turning point in this history, according to Hobbes, was the transformation of verbs into nouns, once their signification of time and function as copula had been eliminated. In a certain sense it was inevitable that this would happen (in order to say '*accidens sive actus*') because otherwise it would have been impossible to express 'the variety of concepts that are determined in the senses of man due to the actions of bodies'. It was not however inevitable that the verb 'to be', would be transformed into 'essence' and made the equivalent of a 'subject' ('*res substrata*') with the same standing as the subject of other accidents. When, subsequently, it was believed that to join 'two names of acts' together it was necessary 'to nominate new acts and essences', then the duplication underlying many linguistic errors of metaphysics ('*locutiones illae metaphysicorum*') began, as when we say 'the will wants' or 'the accident is a being'. In all these cases we are confusing '*ens et esse*', that is, 'body and accident'. Among the principles of Hobbes's critique, what stands out is the refusal to distinguish between essence and existence, between '*ens*' and '*existens*' because for him 'the essence of existence is existence, just as the essence of being' is being; or again. He states: 'the essence and the existence of being are identical', both when 'being (was derived) from its self' (as in '*esse a se*') as well as when 'being (was derived) from another' (as in '*esse ab alio*'). For metaphysicians the identity in God did not constitute the problem, but identity was contested by many in the case of creatures.¹⁸

4. SUAREZ IS NOT HOBBS'S SOURCE

The scholastic best known for refusing the essence-existence distinction in the seventeenth century was Suarez. For him, in created or finite beings, essence and existence are neither distinguished '*in re*' ('in reality'), nor '*secundum distinctionem modalem*' ('according to a modal distinction') but only following a 'distinction of reason'. The underlying motive was that 'the beingness of the essence . . . adds nothing real, but differs from it only in the way in which it is conceived or signified'.¹⁹ Against the followers of Thomas Aquinas, Suarez had appealed to the '*nominales*', quoting among others, Durandus a S. Porciano, Gabriel Biel, Herveus and Gregory of Rimini, but also Achillini, Nifo and Fonseca,²⁰ as well as the scholastics, for whom 'essences of creatures, even when they have been known by God from eternity, nevertheless are nothing, and have no real existence before they receive it through God's free action'. This thesis, as we know, was destined to have great currency in seventeenth-century philosophy, with Descartes's doctrine of the free creation of eternal truths. The parallels with Hobbes are, nevertheless, only apparent, given that the thesis of Suarez depended on absolutely different presuppositions and intentions. Fully accepting Aristotle's ontology, which Hobbes clearly did not, Suarez stressed the contingency of creatures, and for this reason he rejected uncreated essences. A simple distinction 'of reason' but 'with some foundation in reality' sufficed for him to prove the absolute dependency of creatures on God – for 'the act of existing does not belong to the essence of a creature.'²¹

It is clear that Hobbes's critique was based on completely different foundations. For instance, the thesis of nondistinction did not stop Suarez from asserting the existence of separate and noncorporeal essences – 'there are in the universe some created substances that are completely immaterial', he argued.²² In this regard he proceeded systematically, first demonstrating their possibility (finiteness does not require composition of matter and form) and then their effective existence. This was a point incidentally confirmed by Aristotle with regard to the '*intelligentiae abstractae a materia*', and by the 'orthodox' followers of Aristotle in the case of the rational soul, that 'does not include any matter',²³ but hardly needs note that neither the former nor the latter had any place in Hobbes's philosophy! To

the contrary, Suarez's discourse was presented in *Leviathan* as an archetypal example of that type of 'Insignificant Speech' that borders on 'Madness', impossible to translate into any modern language 'or into any tolerable Latin'; a language made up of abstract incorporeal qualities ('those *Nesses*, *Tudes* and *Ties*') that were separated from concrete objects, incomprehensible and very much worse than the discourse of the 'common sort of men'.²⁴

Hobbes's first philosophy is characterised by his need to connect the 'census of things' closely to 'the ordering of words' and the 'validation of reason', unlike the Aristotelians who, incapable of operating the former, had limited themselves to the latter, drawing up their sterile tables of predicaments.²⁵ This standpoint of Hobbes has important ramifications for the notion of essence. Far from subscribing to Aristotle's classical concept of essence as defining 'the first being' that designates 'what a thing is', Hobbes understands it is 'that accident for which we give a certain name to any body, or the accident which denominates its subject'.²⁶ He stresses, therefore, the linguistic character of the universal: this is neither 'the name of any thing existent in nature, nor of any idea or phantasm formed in the mind'. Dismissing realism and conceptualism, Hobbes opts for nominalism because the universal, for him, is 'always the name of some word or name'.²⁷ But clearly present though this strongly linguistic bias is in Hobbes's doctrine of truth²⁸ and error,²⁹ and the role of definitions,³⁰ Ockham's philosophy, that English nominalist of renown, is not the only source for him. His antischolastic and humanist references point in a completely different direction, in fact. Neither Ockham nor his followers denounce scholasticism for having fallen into error, by starting from the substantial ambiguity of the term 'ousía' in Aristotle and its quadruple meaning, and then going on systematically to replace *essentia* with *substantia*. It was rather a feature in Renaissance critique, first and foremost of Lorenzo Valla.

5. VALLA AND THE ANALYSIS OF 'ESSENTIA'

One of the fundamental points of Valla's doctrine, 'the analysis of *essentia*',³¹ is the criticism of abstract concepts. A theory of 'meta-physical' subject, par excellence, Valla treated it from the standpoint of ordinary language, convinced that 'dialectic and philosophy do not usually, and nor must they, distance themselves from the commonest habits of language, as from a well-paved and commonly followed

road'. For him a neutral term like '*album*', 'white' as a 'concrete', means 'a white thing', that is in fact 'two things': 'the body and also that quality, that alone is said to be "abstract" (in this case "whiteness")'.³² Similarly, for Hobbes the concrete was to be the name of a thing that is supposed to exist and that is provided with qualities; while the latter, considered separately, were to be called abstract.³³ For Valla, '*ens*', or being, is also none other than a neutral participle used as a noun, simply indicating 'something that exists' ('*rem que est*').³⁴ But his most interesting point concerns nouns ending in '*-itas*'. In this case, as well as attacking Boethius, he went so far as to attack the fundamental terms of metaphysics, and in particular the most important one: essence, the characteristic target of humanist polemic.

In *De Corpore*, Hobbes, following Valla, made the case that abstract nouns derive from nominal predicates, which denote 'the cause of a concrete name existing in a thing supposed to be real', as for example 'corporeity' which derives from 'being a body'. Within these limits, abstract nouns have their 'use', since they enable us to 'reason', that is to 'calculate the properties of bodies'. But their 'abuse' derives from the illusion that 'to abstract' is the equivalent of 'to separate' the 'accidents' from the 'bodies' in which they inhere.³⁵ This was the fault in the case of Descartes' *cogito*, which posits thought as wholly distinct from the body to which it belongs. And Hobbes adds, 'from the same fountain spring those insignificant words, *abstract substance, separated essence*, and the like', as well as 'that confusion of words derived from the Latin verb *est*, as *essence, essentiality, entity, entitative*; besides *reality, aliquiddity, quiddity, &c*'.

Some of these considerations were in fact already contained in an important chapter of Valla's *Dialectica*, where he cast himself in the role of a '*gramaticus*', observing that in Latin nouns ending in '*-itas*' do not derive from nouns, nor from all adjectives indiscriminately, but, in the case of the latter, only from those ending in '*-us*' or in '*-er*' (of the second declension) and from some ending in '*-is*' (of the third), but not from participles ending in '*-ens*'. He concluded: 'therefore neither can we derive the term "*entitas*" from "*ens*"'.³⁶ Furthermore, when he deplores the errors of those who 'confound the concrete with the abstract', together with the pairs '*ens*'/'*essentia*', '*sapiens*'/'*sapientia*', Hobbes also recalls the pair '*deus*'/'*deitas*' and (with John of Damascus) 'absolutely denies that *deitas* is *deus*'.³⁷ The theme and the two parallel examples of *deitas* and *essentia* are

recurrent, in fact, to be found also in his *An Answer to Bishop Bramhall's Book called 'The Catching of the Leviathan'*.³⁸ Hobbes denounced the lexicon of entity and essence as a semantic perversion, the fruit of scholastic 'barbarism', just like Valla, who referring to nouns ending in '-itas', had called them 'expressions released from the hovel of barbarism'.³⁹ It is significant that, despite their different starting points, the two authors both ended up by deflating that abstract noun *par excellence*, *essence*. Valla expressed himself on this matter in a chapter with the explicit title: '*Inter essentiam et ipsum esse nihil interesse: et item in caeteris, ut inter voluntatem et ipsum velle*'. ('Between essence and being itself there is no difference, as well as in all the other things, as between the will and to will itself'.) He first attacked Boethius, who expounded the predicaments, and was responsible (due to his translation of 'ousía' as '*substantia*') for that chain of semantic deviations about which Hobbes, too, was to complain. Valla then pointed out that, properly speaking, in Aristotle's texts 'we do not find either the expression *essendi*, since the Greeks did not have the gerund, nor the term *essentia*, but only the infinitive preceded by the article'. Thus, all abstract terms (like will) are to be reported in the corresponding infinitive form used as a noun, and nor can we say that essence or '*ousía*' escapes this general rule.⁴⁰

Valla's considerations were part of a more general framework designed to dispense with Aristotle's categories and come closer to everyday speech.⁴¹ Underlying his polemic against the absurdities of the scholastics⁴² and against Aristotle's 'ignorant science',⁴³ lay a rhetorical model derived from Quintilian. Like Quintilian, Valla reduced ten categories to three (substance, quality and action).⁴⁴ Disparaging the artificiality of classifications like those in Porphyry's tree, Valla looked above all at the supreme category '*res*'.⁴⁵ There may be a trace of this in the pages that Hobbes dedicated to 'forms of the predicaments', where he warned against confusing the distinction of 'names' with the real 'diversities of things'. For Hobbes, too, abstract 'forms' are too distant from a true 'ordination of names' and impossible to obtain 'as long as philosophy remains imperfect'.⁴⁶

6. 'WHAT IS ESSENCE?'

Hobbes goes far beyond Valla's 'dialectical' reform, in fact. Suffice to reflect that Hobbes's 'tree' starts from the category 'body' (not

from 'substance'), it does not contemplate the dichotomy between 'corporeal' and 'incorporeal', and, unlike Valla, it mentions neither '*spiritus*' nor '*anima*', neither God nor the angels. Despite this, the deep affinities with Valla's linguistic and anti-Aristotelian argument are undeniable.⁴⁷ In his last writings Hobbes returned to the polemic against 'separate essences' and against the very term 'essence', of which he observed, there is no trace in the Old Testament or in the Hebrew language. In *Answer to a Book published by Dr. Bramhall* . . . he declared himself ready to accept the term, but provided it were only used to indicate 'the same thing as *ens*, τὸ ὄν'.⁴⁸ 'If he means *essence* the same with *ens*, τὸ ὄν, I approve it. Otherwise, what is *essence*? There is no such word in the Old Testament'. Hobbes declared against Bramhall: 'Essence and all other abstract names, are words artificial belonging to the art of logic, and signify only the manner how we consider the substance itself. And of this I have spoken sufficiently in my *Leviathan*'.⁴⁹ In the Latin *Leviathan* he directly attributed the origins of 'scholastic theology' to the reification into essence of the copulative functions of the verb '*esse*'.⁵⁰ He followed Valla in holding that the term '*deitas*' was misleading – for philological reasons relating to the correct formation of abstract nouns. But Hobbes drew far more radical conclusions on the metaphysical plane, claiming that what corresponds to the reality of God is not an essence, which the term '*deitas*' would suggest, but rather a substance, that is to say, in Hobbes's rigorous philosophical lexicon, a corporeal, although 'subtle', entity.⁵¹

Superimposing his own philosophical filter on Valla's much more philological scheme, Hobbes obtained results that went well beyond humanist exegesis. As he wrote in *Historical Narration*:

These real things are called by the Latin philosophers *entia*, *subiecta*, *substantiae*; and by the Greek philosophers τὰ ὄντα, *hypokeímena*, *hypostámena*. The others, which are incorporeal, are called by the Greek philosophers, *ousía*, *symbebekóta*, *phantásmata*. Misunderstandings sprinkled throughout the history of metaphysics originated from the fact that the Latins translated *ousía* into *substantia*, and so confound real and corporeal things with incorporeal: which is not well; for essence and substance signify divers things.⁵²

It is significant that, besides invoking an important authority, Tertullian, who, as a good stoic philosopher, subscribed to materialist

corporealism, the author of *Historical Narration* should refer to a logical-linguistic motivation for the confusion of essence and substance, and the humanist origins of this complaint are now known to us. This great misunderstanding passed on 'in all disputes, both of philosophy and divinity', might finally be refuted were we only to reflect on the fact that '*essentia* signifies no more, than if we should talk ridiculously of the *isness* of the thing that is', Hobbes notes.⁵³ If we compare this with the chapter of *Dialectica* in which Valla warned against the errors caused by the confusion between *essentia* and *substantia*,⁵⁴ then Hobbes's solution appears close, but more daring in its conclusions. Hobbes also subscribed to the accusations of ambiguity aimed at Aristotle's metaphysics and denounced the purely verbal character of its cardinal concepts. But whereas Valla limited himself to recommending greater philological purity of language so as to avoid 'linguistic ambiguities' ('*sermonis ambages*'), Hobbes went to the roots of the problem, denouncing the mystifying role of abstraction.

Hobbes returns to the question in the *Appendix* to the Latin *Leviathan*, first to deprecate the Church Fathers who did not distinguish between *essentia* and *substantia*. He stresses that the latter should be understood as 'the same thing as *ens*, that is, whatever is truly existent, distinguished from appearance (*phantasma*) and name'. The clarifications that immediately follow return to arguments familiar from his critique of White. The reduction of '*ousía*' to '*ón*' or to '*tò eînai*' (just as '*leukótes*' becomes '*tò eînai leukón*', 'life' becomes 'to live', or '*albedo*' '*esse album*') is closely linked to the thesis that 'essences cannot exist separately from the things whose essences they are'.⁵⁵ Considered against the background of Renaissance discussions and their critique of the dominant scholastic philosophy, we can understand why this doctrine of 'separate essences' was imputed to Aristotle, although there is not much historical foundation for doing so.⁵⁶ In Valla's *Dialectica* we find not only many of the examples quoted by Hobbes, but above all we also find the conceptual core of his argument. The underlying principle consists in relating *essentia* to *esse*, since the 'infinitives' taken '*nominaliter*' in no way differ from the corresponding noun forms.⁵⁷ Hobbes draws all the consequences, explaining that it is precisely by attributing a 'separate' existence to essence that we commit an error that is not only linguistic but also philosophical because the

'distinction between different things and different considerations of the same thing' is obscured or annulled.⁵⁸ In this way precisely we commit the capital error, the fallacious reduction ('paralogism') singled out in *De Corpore*, when we claim to join the name of a body (substance) to the name of an 'accident' or of a 'phantasm',⁵⁹ that is to an abstract noun.⁶⁰

This is serious enough in the case of those abstraction nouns that nevertheless have some relation to the 'phantasm' in the imagination, and that are therefore useful in indicating the 'cause' of the concrete noun. But this paralogism is completely senseless when we are dealing with the 'name of *essentia simpliciter*', that 'has not got its cause in our phantasms' (unlike the names of quantities, colours, etc., 'that derive from our five senses'). Neither is the '*essentia entis simpliciter*' a 'phantasm', and we may wonder of what it is in reality the 'name'. Hobbes's answer to this question is radical and brings together both his materialism and Valla's 'reism'. When we refer to the '*ens simpliciter*', he says, 'essence and being are synonyms and, as a consequence, the word *essence* is superfluous'.⁶¹ It is fair to say that Hobbes's scathing dismissal of humanism in *Leviathan*, which put stress on its liberalism – in politics bought at 'the effusion of so much blood'⁶² – masks the degree to which his first philosophy, based on the humanists, cut a swathe through the 'metaphysical errors', which they believed had contaminated Christian doctrine.⁶³

NOTES

1. Lat. *Lev.* App.; *OL*, III, 531. I quote from the English translation annotated by George Wright, *Interpretation*, 18 (1991), 323–413, on p. 363.
2. *Lev.*, xlv, 371–2/689–91. I quote *Leviathan* (indicated as *Lev.*) from the English edition with introduction by C. B. Macpherson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968) and then from the edition, with selected variants from the Latin edition of 1668, with Introduction and Notes, by Edwin Curley (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994). The first number indicates the chapter; this is followed by the page numbering of the 1651 edition, then that of the Macpherson edition, and lastly that of the Curley edition.
3. *OL*, III, 498–9.
4. *Lev.*, 46, 373/691–2/460. Also the Presbyterians made the mistake of conceiving 'a Power . . . distinct from that of the Civill State' (cf. *Lev.* 47, 387/714/484).

5. *Lev.* 46, 370/687–8/457; 373/692/460.
6. Compare the edition of the Latin text edited by G. Paganini and G. Canziani (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1982–3, 2 vols.), I, 27–45 (together with my comment). In his attacks on Aristotle, Hobbes also insists on his ‘pagan’ character. Compare for example *Lev.*, 46, 376/696/463: ‘If such *Metaphysiques*, and *Physiques* as this, be not *Vain Philosophy*, there was never any; nor needed St. Paul to give us warning to avoid it’.
7. *Lev.*, 46, 379/701–2/467. In *Lat. Lev.*, 47; *OL*, III, 505, Hobbes makes a similar comment, in connection with the birth of the ‘regnum tenebrarum’: ‘Postremo, per doctrinas humanas, metaphysicam, ethicam, et politicam Aristotelis, per distinctiones frivolas, sermonem obscurum, et voces barbaras, tenebras jam inductas reddunt spissiores, et ipsis principibus, quando volunt, palpabiles’.
8. *DCo*, III, 4, ed. K. Schuhmann (Paris: Vrin, 1999), 34: ‘Non sunt itaque eae voces *essentia*, *entitas* omnisque illa barbaries ad Philosophiam necessariae’.
9. On these aspects see my articles: G. Paganini, ‘Thomas Hobbes e Lorenzo Valla. Critica umanistica e filosofia moderna’, *Rinascimento* 39 (1999): 515–68; Paganini, ‘Hobbes, Valla and the Trinity’, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 11 (2003): 183–218; Paganini, ‘Hobbes face à l’héritage érasmien: philologie humaniste et philosophie nouvelle’, *Institut d’Histoire de la Réformation. Bulletin annuel* (Genève) 24 (2002–3): 33–51, as well as the important essay by Quentin Skinner, ‘Hobbes and the *studia humanitatis*’, in Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, vol. III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 38–65. For the humanist and rhetorical background to Hobbes’s philosophy, essential reading is the historical reconstruction in Skinner’s book: *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
10. Juan Luis Vives, Spanish humanist (1492–1540); Pierre de la Ramée (Ramus), French humanist (1515–72); Gianfrancesco Pico, nephew of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533); Francisco Sanchez, Portuguese physician and philosopher (1550/1–1623); Pierre Charron, French theologian and philosopher (1541–1603).
11. L. Valla, *Dialecticae disputationes*: Laurentius Valla clarissimo et eloquentissimo viro, Candido Decembri (in L. Valla, *Opera*, Basileae apud Henricum Petrum, 1540, 633). This work went through various editions and had different titles. I refer here to the text and title of the edition cited here of *Opera* (indicated as *Dial.*), as well as to the critical edition by G. Zippel (Padova: Antenore, 1982, 2 vols.). On the importance of Valla’s works see Cesare Vasoli, *La dialettica e la retorica*

- dell'Umanesimo. 'Invenzione' e 'metodo' nella cultura del XV e XVI secolo (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1968), 28–77; Salvatore I. Camporeale, *L. Valla. Umanesimo e teologia*, presentation by E. Garin (Firenze: INSR, 1972) and, more recently, John Monfasani, 'Lorenzo Valla and Rudolph Agricola', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 28 (1990): 181–200; Peter Mack, *Renaissance Argument. Valla and Agricola in the Traditions of Rhetoric and Dialectic* (Leiden–Köln–New York: Brill, 1993), 37–63. For an overview see Riccardo Fubini, 'Contributo per l'interpretazione della 'Dialectica' di Lorenzo Valla', *Rivista Storica Italiana* 90 (1998): 119–43.
12. Th. Hobbes: ms. Paris BN lat. 6566A, untitled. Th. Hobbes, *Critique du De Mundo de Thomas White*. Edition critique d'un texte inédit par Jean Jaquot et Harold Whitmore Jones (Paris: Vrin, 1973), indicated as *DM*, 313–14.
 13. Compare Thomas Aquinas, *Opuscula philosophica*, ed. Spiazzi (Turin: Marietti, 1954), n. 464.
 14. *DM*, 313–14. See also *DM*, 334–5.
 15. *DM*, 381, 314, 387 (Aristotle again).
 16. *DM*, 170–1. For the distinction between 'first philosophy' and 'metaphysics' see *Lev.*, 46, 371/688/458.
 17. *DM*, 329: 'metaphysica haec quodammodo irrisisset *Lucianus*, si temporibus illius, sicut physici et ethici, ita & metaphysici extitissent? nec huius tantum, sed metaphysicorum omnium causa, *Luciane utinam viveres!*'
 18. *DM*, 334, 346. See also p. 335. On these themes see Martine Pécharman, 'Le vocabulaire de l'être dans la philosophie première', in *Hobbes et son vocabulaire*, ed. Yves Charles Zarka (Paris: Vrin, 1992), 31–59.
 19. F. Suarez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, XXXI 'De ente finito', i, 2, in F. Suarez, *Opera omnia*, vol. XXVI (Parisiis apud Ludovicum Vivès, 1861), 224b; see also vol. XII, 228a–b, and Pierre-François Courtine, *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique* (Paris: PUF, 1990).
 20. Durandus a S. Porciano (c. 1270–about 1332); Gabriel Biel (c. 1410–95); Natalis Herveus (fl. 1318); Gregory of Rimini (d. 1358); Alessandro Achillini (1463–1512); Agostino Nifo (1473?–1546?); Pedro de Fonseca (1528–99).
 21. Suarez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, XXXI 'De ente finito', ii, 1, 229a; vi, 13, 246a.
 22. Suarez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, disp. XXXV 'De immateriali substantia creata', i, 5 (*Opera*, vol. XXVI, 426b).
 23. Suarez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, disp. XIII 'De materiali causa substantiae', xiv, 8–10 (*Opera*, vol. XXV, 457a–58a).
 24. *Lev.*, 8, 40/146–7/47.

25. *DCo*, II, 16, 30; *EW*, I 28. Predicament: one of the basic states or classifications described by Aristotle into which all things can be placed, a category.
26. *DCo*, VIII, 23, 92; *EW*, I, 117.
27. *DCo*, II, 9, 23; *EW*, I, 20. In other passages (e.g., III, 3, 33) Hobbes outlines a parallelism between the 'causes of names' and the 'causes of concepts', which has induced some to ascribe Hobbes's position to conceptualism. Compare Mario Dal Pra, 'Sulla Logica di Hobbes', *Rivista critica di storia della filosofia* 17 (1962): 411–33.
28. *DCo*, III, 7–8, 35–6.
29. *DCo*, V, 2, 51–2.
30. *DCo*, III, 9, 36.
31. Vasoli, *La dialettica e la retorica dell'Umanesimo*, 50.
32. Valla, *Dial.*, I, 3 ('Nihil esse que concreta dicuntur, nisi certis paucisque in locis'), 650, 652 (Zippel edn, I, 21, 26).
33. *DCo*, III, 3, 32–3.
34. *Dial.*, 652 (Zippel edn, I, 30).
35. *DCo*, III, 3–4, 32–5; *EW*, I, 32–4.
36. *Dial.*, I, 4, 652ff: 'Nulla nomina in 'itas' descendere a substantivis sed ab adiectivis, nec his omnibus' (Zippel edn, I, 30ff). Some examples found in Hobbes may also be found in Valla: first and foremost the examples from Cicero (*Ad fam.* III 7, 5) of 'Appietas' and 'Lentulitas' as abstract nouns (*DCo*, III, 3, 33; Valla, *Dial.*, I, 4, 653; Zippel edn, I, 34).
37. *An Historical Narration concerning Heresy*, *EW*, IV, 395. Note that Valla had also criticized the use of terms like 'quiditas', 'identitas', 'reitas', 'perseitas' and among them also 'deitas' (*Dial.*, I, 4, 653). This last example is further amplified in the final edition (cf. Zippel edn, I, 32–6; II, 372–3).
38. *An Answer to Bishop Bramhall's Book called 'The Catching of the Leviathan'*, *EW*, IV, 304–5; *Lat. Lev.*, App. I; *OL*, III, 532.
39. *DeC*, III, 4, 34; *Dial.* I, 4, 652 (Zippel edn, I, 30–1): 'Quid, quod ab isto 'ens' faciunt 'entitas' . . . qualia multa alia, ut a 'quid' 'quiditas', a 'per se' 'perseitas', ab 'hecce' 'hecceitas' et cetera e barbarie quodam gurgustio prolata?'
40. *Dial.*, I, 5, 653–4: 'Seneca in quadam epistola negat *tò on* et *tèn ousían* latine exprimi posse. Boëtius maluit *ousían* non verbum de verbo, transferre substantiam: quae dicitur graece *hypóstasin* unde factum est: ut, cum nomen substantia, non suo graeco, sed alteri detur: necessario quidam graeca voce utantur *hypostasis*. Neque vero hoc fecit Boetius, quia nomen essentia reformidarit, ut durum: Nam eo uti solet, sed in alium sensum: quae fuit causa cur permulti latinorum erraverint' (Zippel edn, I, 37). Valla refers to Boethius, *In Categ. Arist.* i ('De substantia'):

Migne, P. L., 64, 181–202. Note also that the use of the term '*essentia*' had already been contested by one of the great authorities recognized by Valla (Quintilianus, *Inst.* VIII 3, 33). For the passage from Seneca: *Epist.* 58, 6–8.

41. *Dial.*, I, 2, 649 (Zippel edn, I, 19): 'Itaque melius de intellectu verborum mulierculae nonnumquam sentiunt, quam summi philosophi. Illae enim verba ad usum trahunt: isti ad lusum'.
42. 'O depravatrix naturalium significationum peripatetica natio!' (*Dial.*, I, 12, 673; Zippel edn, I, 111). Similarly, Hobbes compared ordinary language ('The common sort of men seldome speak Insignificantly...') to the abstruse language ('abstruse Philosophy') of 'Schoole-men' like Suarez (*Lev.*, 8, 40/146/46).
43. 'Inscita quaedam scientia'. Valla refers to power and act: *Dial.*, I, 16, 678; see p. 679: 'Valeant igitur haec superstitiosa et calumniosa Aristotelis vocabula, in quibus cum vult videri argutus, mihi videtur potius arguendus' (Zippel edn, I, 128, 130).
44. *Dial.*, I, 13, 673–4: 'De accidente, quodque novem praedicamenta ad duo referuntur, qualitatem et actionem' (Zippel edn, I, 112ff); compare I, 17, 680ff: 'Caetera praedicamenta, aut ad substantiam, aut ad qualitatem, aut ad actionem recidere' (Zippel edn, I, 134ff).
45. *Dial.*, I, 7, 656ff: 'Substantiae distributio contra Porphyrium et alios' (Zippel edn, I, 46ff).
46. *DCo*, II, 16, 30; *EW*, I, 28. A recent line of reasoning relating to Valla might also hold for Hobbes: that his critique of the 'abuses' deriving from a perverse linguistic use of general or abstract terms cannot necessarily be said to derive from Ockham. On this point, with regard to Valla see the convincing arguments put forth by John Monfasani, 'Disputationes vallianae' in *Penser entre les lignes: Philologie et philosophie au Quattrocento*, ed. F. Mariani Zini (Lille: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2001), 229–50 (reprinted in John Monfasani, *Greeks and Latins in Renaissance Italy. Studies on Humanism and Philosophy in the 15th Century*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004, n. XII) and Lodi Nauta, 'William of Ockham and Lorenzo Valla: False Friends: Semantics and Ontological Reduction', *Renaissance Quarterly* 56 (2003): 613–51.
47. See also Lodi Nauta, 'Lorenzo Valla's Critique of Aristotelian Psychology', *Vivarium* 41(2003): 120–43.
48. *Answer*, *EW*, IV, 304.
49. *Answer* *EW*, IV, 309: It is not clear why Hobbes expressed himself differently in another passage (Lat. *Lev.*, App. I; *OL*, III, 532): 'Manifestum ergo est, in ente simpliciter differre inter se ens et essentiam, et multo magis in concretis.' However, the context is very particular and relates to the problem of divine incarnation. There is another singularity:

- quoting John of Damascus, Hobbes does not appear to make objections to the use of the term 'Deitas', which on the contrary he had always rejected for the above reasons.
50. Lat. *Lev.*, 46; *OL*, III, 497–8. Hobbes agrees with Valla in holding that the proper meaning of 'ousia' is 'res', in the sense of 'divitiae' (*OL*, III, 498). Compare Valla, *Dial.*, I, 7, 655: 'substantia', in the sense of 'divitiae', 'census'.
 51. Compare Valla, *Dial.*, I, 4, 653: 'Quare sciant se errare qui dicunt deitas...' (Zippel edn, I, 32).
 52. *Historical Narration*, *EW*, IV, 394.
 53. *Historical Narration*, *EW*, IV, 394. This doctrine was said to have been propagated through writings of the Fathers who 'have affected to publish principles of logic and physics according to the sense of Aristotle', like Athanasius and John of Damascus (p. 395). However, Hobbes goes on to recognize that at least the latter had correctly distinguished between *deitas* and *deus* (p. 395).
 54. See above all *Dial.*, I, 6, 654–5: 'De distinguendo horum verborum essentia et substantia usu, ne ambagibus sermo implicetur' (Zippel edn, I, 41–6), which is a critical discussion of Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, VI, 3 and *De anima*, II, 2 e I, 3. It may be that the idea of linking the metaphysical theme of the 'separate' essence to the psychological theme of the equally 'separate' soul came to Hobbes from the juxtaposition already present in Valla's critique.
 55. Lat. *Lev.*, App.; *OL*, III, 530–1 (Wright trans. p. 362): 'Idem quod *ens*, id est, quicquid est vere *existens*, distinctum a *phantasmate* et *nomine*.'
 56. Wolfers correctly notes that in Aristotle on the contrary we find a polemic against the 'separate essences' (see for example *Metaphysica*, XII, 9–10), but the author does not go beyond the obvious point that Hobbes was targeting medieval scholasticism. See Benedikt Wolfers, 'Geschwätzige Philosophie.' *Thomas Hobbes' Kritik an Aristoteles* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1991), 22, 28–30.
 57. Valla, *Dial.*, I, 5, 654 (Zippel edn, I, 39–40): 'nihil enim significatione differunt infinita: quum nominaliter accipiuntur, a suis verbalibus.' The examples given by Valla are illuminating: 'Ergo ipsum vivere, nihil aliud est quam vita, et ipsum currere, quam cursus: et ipsum saltare, legere, audire, videre: quam saltatio, lectio, auditio, visio: ipsum amare, quam amatio seu amor: ipsum velle quam voluntas: ipsum scire quam scientia: ipsum posse, quam potentia sive vires.' 'Significat autem infinitum, ipsam rem quam continet verbum.'
 58. Lat. *Lev.*, App.; *OL*, III, 531.
 59. *DCo*, V, 2, 51–2.

60. Lat. *Lev.*, App.; *OL*, III, 531: 'Quae vocum abstractio, cum nihil aliud sit quam phantasmatis vel nominis, ab aliis omnibus ejusdem concreti considerationibus et nominibus separata, consideratio, ad doctrinam causarum fere necessaria est'.
61. Lat. *Lev.*, App.; *OL*, III, 532: 'Quando ergo pro ente simpliciter dicimus essentiam, erunt essentia et ens synonyma, et per consequens vox *essentia* superflua est.' On the contrary there is a more 'moderate', critical and almost sceptical use of the essences as nominal selections of phenomena or ways of the body manifesting itself, in the case of essences that relate to sensible phantasms. In this connection I mention two of my earlier articles: G. Paganini, 'Hobbes among ancient and modern sceptics: phenomena and bodies' in *The Return of Scepticism. From Hobbes and Descartes to Bayle*, ed. G. Paganini, *International Archives of the History of Ideas*, 184 (Dordrecht–Boston–London: Kluwer, 2003), 3–35; G. Paganini, 'Hobbes and the 'continental' tradition of scepticism' in *Scepticism as a Force in Renaissance and Post-Renaissance Thought. New Findings and New Interpretations of the Role and Influence of Modern Scepticism*, ed. Richard H. Popkin and José R. Maia Neto, 'JHP Series' (Amherst: Humanity Books, 2004), 65–105.
62. *Lev.*, 21, 110/267/141.
63. For Hobbes's relationship with Plato and Aristotle in general, see the excellent work by Karl Schuhmann, 'Hobbes and the political thought of Plato and Aristotle' in *Politica e diritto in Hobbes*, ed. G. Sorigi (Milano: Giuffré, 1995), 1–36. It is very sad no longer to be able to discuss these matters with Schuhmann, such a refined and penetrating scholar. In his memory I would like to quote from a private letter (13 March 2001) in which he replied to my having sent him an earlier essay on Hobbes and Valla: 'there arrives your fine article on Hobbes and Valla . . . I would like to congratulate you [on] unearthing Valla as a (more or less remote?) source of some Hobbesian notions. . . . Only patient work does count. And it also pays off, as you show in the end with your remarks on *esse/essentia* vs. *ens*. A source I had looked for in vain for many years! And now there it is. . . . And you also make Hobbes root[ed] firmly in humanism'. I hesitated long before publishing this private communication, and have decided to do so with the intent of paying homage to the passion and honesty of Karl Schuhmann, still for all of us a great man and a great scholar.

15 *Leviathan* and Its Anglican Context

Late in life Hobbes penned a Latin prose autobiography. In it he talked about the composition of *Leviathan*.¹ He recorded that he had hoped the book would not be displeasing to his fellow-citizens, but ‘especially to those who had sided with the bishops’ – that is to say, to Anglicans. He claimed that although there was no church government at all in England at the time when he was working on *Leviathan*, and that everyone had therefore been free to write and publish what they pleased on theological matters, he had in fact been careful to say nothing in it that contradicted the doctrine of the Church of England as it had been constituted by royal authority before the Civil War. He asserted that ‘he had always approved the government of the church by bishops before all other forms’ and he related how he had refused Catholic rites when he had been gravely ill in France, but had shortly afterwards accepted Anglican rites from John Cosin (later Bishop of Durham). Hobbes also insisted that after he returned to England he had not worshipped in any of the country’s puritan churches, where he had encountered only seditious preaching and ‘extemporary prayers’, but had sought out an Anglican congregation, though it was more than a mile from where he lived. In those times, no law required anyone to attend any church, and the fact that Hobbes had voluntarily, and at considerable inconvenience, gone to an Anglican church was (on his own account, at least) evidence of his Anglicanism and of his sincere Christianity.

Of course, Hobbes knew that a number of Anglicans had attacked *Leviathan*. They included such eminent clerics as Thomas Tenison, who became Archbishop of Canterbury, John Bramhall, Bishop of Derry and Archbishop of Armagh, and William Lucy, Bishop of St David’s. In his autobiography he claimed that such attacks were the

work of prideful and self-interested divines and academics who could not brook any disagreement with their dogmas. He portrayed himself as a loyal Anglican and rejected any notion that the book was intended as an attack on Anglicanism. Yet his Anglican critics read it as just that. In the survey that follows of Hobbes's ideas on ecclesiastical matters and those professed by conforming members of the established church of England, we shall see that both Hobbes and his critics were partially justified in their judgements on his relationship to Anglican thought. On a number of key questions he did indeed endorse Anglican ideas and reject the thinking of Catholics and of puritan nonconformists (including Presbyterians and Independents), but on some questions he diverged as sharply from the Anglicans as from any other religious group. The first section in this chapter details some important respects in which the teachings of *Leviathan* were close to, or the same as, those of Anglicans. The second section surveys a number of the ways in which Hobbes's ideas differed from Anglican thinking. It is sometimes plausibly suggested that in *Leviathan* Hobbes made these differences far plainer than they had been in his earlier writings and that, whereas in *The Elements of Law* and *De Cive* he had expressed broad agreement with conventional Anglicanism (or at least had disguised his disagreement), in *Leviathan* he went out of his way to attack principles that he knew many Anglicans held dear. The subject of the third and final section is the nature and extent of the changes to his earlier theories on church-state relations that Hobbes introduced in *Leviathan*.

I. HOBBS AND ANGLICAN TEACHING ON THE ROYAL SUPREMACY, UNIFORMITY, CEREMONIES AND MATTERS INDIFFERENT

Anglicans maintained that in every state there should be one church and one uniform method of worshipping God. They argued that the rites and ceremonies employed in worship were to be instituted by the authority of the church's Supreme Governor, who was the monarch. While Catholics gave the pope supremacy over the church everywhere, Anglicans claimed that each national church was jurisdictionally independent from all other churches. Supremacy over every national church, they held, belonged to the head of the state, and not to any person or assembly independent of the state. They

vigorously rejected the Catholic idea that the pope was superior to kings and that he could excommunicate and depose them.

Presbyterians standardly argued that the church in each country should be run by a council of elected officials, such as the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland. They contended that the national council was superior in church affairs to the head of the state, and that it could give him binding commands. If he failed to obey them, the church authorities could excommunicate him. Presbyterians rejected the Catholic notion that the church had the power to depose kings, arguing that its authority was purely spiritual. But they held that it could use its spiritual authority to encourage people to employ temporal means to enforce obedience to the church's decrees. So, if a king disobeyed the church, and if the people had the authority to discipline the king, then the church could use the threat of excommunication to persuade the people to call the king to account for his disobedience. Anglicans, by contrast, commonly denied that the church can excommunicate the king, or do anything to encourage active resistance to him. They typically argued that the sovereign is accountable only to God, and they sided with the King in the Civil War.

Congregationalists or Independents differed on key points from both the Presbyterians and the Anglicans. In the 1640s they, like many Presbyterians, commonly claimed that kings are accountable to their subjects, and that it is legitimate to resist wicked rulers by force if necessary. But they diverged from Presbyterians in arguing that each local congregation should have the authority to decide on its own ecclesiastical affairs, and that it should not be accountable on such matters to any authority beyond itself. They rejected the notion that any single person or assembly should have ecclesiastical power over the country as a whole. The sovereign, they held, had temporal power, though he was accountable to the people for how he exercised it; but in church affairs the sovereign was subject to the congregation of which he was a member, and congregations could discipline and even excommunicate erring members.

Both Independents and Presbyterians objected to the Anglican Prayer Book and to the ceremonies that it prescribed, viewing them as tainted by popery. They claimed that God's word alone should guide us on matters of worship and denied that the civil magistrate has any authority to impose ceremonies upon his subjects. A leading

religious cause of the English Civil War was the belief, shared by puritans of both Presbyterian and Independent stripes, that the Anglican authorities in the 1630s had tyrannically oppressed the tender consciences of the godly, forcing them to worship the Lord with ceremonies that puritans thought blasphemous and idolatrous. Some puritans criticized not just the ceremonies used in Anglican services, but the very idea of worshipping God in set prayers authorized by the state. Such prayers ought only to be employed, Viscount Saye and Sele told the House of Lords in 1641, where people lack 'the gifts and graces' to pray extempore.² Those who imposed set prayers upon godly ministers, said John Milton in the same year, exercised 'a supercilious tyranny improprating the Spirit of God to themselves'. True, the Lord's Prayer was a biblical example of a set (or 'stinted') prayer. But that did not at all show that anyone was now authorized to impose such prayers, for 'there bee no other Lords that can stint with like authority'. Only God could prescribe ceremonies or prayers as to be used in divine worship.³ Anglicans argued, by contrast, that it was for the national church, under its Supreme Governor, to determine what ceremonies were to be used in services. They claimed that if God had not specifically prohibited a ceremony, it was in itself a matter indifferent, and that in such matters the individual was bound in conscience to obey the authorities. Against puritan objections to the ecclesiastical laws prescribing ceremonies, Robert Sanderson (later Bishop of Lincoln), made the telling argument: '(if they had any strength in them) would as well conclude against the politicall lawes in the civill state, and against domesticall orders in private families'.⁴ Puritan attitudes towards freedom of conscience in religious matters, claimed Anglicans, undermined not just the church's authority but also the authority of the civil magistrate in the state and of the father in the family.

On questions of the Royal ecclesiastical Supremacy, ceremonies, and the rights of individuals to disobey or resist the sovereign, *Leviathan* sided decisively against puritan and Catholic thinking and in favour of Anglican. Natural law requires us, declared Hobbes, to worship God by performing actions that honour Him. This was to be done, he proceeded, both by private individuals and also by the commonwealth at large, for 'seeing a commonwealth is but one person, it ought to exhibit but one worship, which then it doth when it commandeth it to be exhibited by private men publicly'. The essence

of public worship, he continued, 'is to be uniform; for those actions that are done differently by different men cannot be said to be a public worship'. So 'where many sorts of worship be allowed, proceeding from the different religions of private men, it cannot be said there is any public worship, nor that the commonwealth is of any religion at all'.⁵ Diversity of religious practice in a single commonwealth was therefore contrary to nature, and in *The Elements of Law* Hobbes spelled out that 'to neglect prayer' and to speak to God 'extempore' was incompatible with properly honouring Him. So too was failure to adorn his house – the church – as sumptuously as one's own home, and coming 'to church slovenly'. Other signs were 'in their own nature indifferent till to avoid indecency and discord, it be otherwise determined'.⁶ In *Leviathan* he similarly claimed that some actions are 'naturally signs of honour' – for instance, 'decent, modest, humble behaviour' – but that there are 'an infinite number of actions and gestures of an indifferent nature'. Of these, those that 'the Commonwealth shall ordain to be publicly and universally in use, as signs of honour and part of God's worship, are to be taken and used for such by the subjects'.⁷ Hobbes's emphasis on decency and order as the foundations of worship was typical of Anglican thinking. Richard Hooker stressed the duty of individuals to obey ecclesiastical decrees made to promote 'comlines, order, and decencie' in the church.⁸ Joseph Hall (Bishop of Exeter and Norwich) inveighed against puritans who favoured services of extreme simplicity, and placed 'a kind of holiness in a slovenly neglect, thus breaching St Paul's injunction that all things in the church should be done in a decent and orderly fashion'.⁹

Hobbes argued that the coming of Christ had not diminished the natural power of the sovereign in ecclesiastical affairs, for Christ's kingdom was not of this world.¹⁰ For this reason Christ had established no new jurisdictional authorities separate from civil sovereigns. Catholics, Presbyterians, and Independents, all granted the church ecclesiastical jurisdiction that was independent of the state, in fact, although they diverged on just what they meant by the church – Catholics, for instance, regarding it as an international institution under the pope, and Independents viewing it as an individual congregation. Hobbes insisted that the sovereign alone has a monopoly of jurisdiction in each state. Church and state, he argued, are not separate institutions with different powers: 'a Church... is

the same thing with a civil commonwealth consisting of Christian men, and is called a civil state, for that the subjects of it are men, and a Church, for that the subjects thereof are Christians'.¹¹ That a Christian church and state constitute one united body, and that supreme power over the church is in the hands of the head of the state were conventional Anglican beliefs. According to Richard Hooker, in a Christian country the '*Church* and the *Commonwealth*' are 'one society'. That society was called a commonwealth when considered politically and a church when viewed as a religious group, but the two were 'one and the same society'. In a Christian state, he declared, 'one and the selfsame people are the *Church* and the *Commonwealth*' and reason showed that 'their Sovereign Lord and Governor in causes civil' should 'have also in *Ecclesiastical* affairs a supreme power'.¹² It followed that the clergy are subordinate to the sovereign in ecclesiastical as well as civil affairs.

The forty-second chapter of *Leviathan* ('Of Power Ecclesiastical') is easily the longest in the book. Its purpose is to refute claims that the clergy possess jurisdiction that is independent from, and not subordinate to, that of the sovereign and, in particular, to undermine the arguments on this subject of the Catholic Cardinal Robert Bellarmine. A great deal of what Hobbes had to say against the theories of Bellarmine and other Catholics had already been said by Anglican writers. One argument in favour of papal claims to power over kings turned on the 'fact of Jehoiada killing Athaliah' (2 Kings 11) – for Jehoiada had been the High Priest (and therefore arguably a precursor of the pope) while Athaliah was a Queen. Hobbes rejected this claim, suggesting that Jehoiada had acted on the authority of the true King, Joash.¹³ On the other hand, he used the deposition of the High Priest Abiathar by King Solomon to support the superiority of kings to clerics.¹⁴ Anglicans frequently discussed these examples, drawing much the same conclusions as Hobbes.¹⁵ They rebutted the claim of Bellarmine and others that early Christians had refrained from resisting their non-Christian rulers, not because they thought it wrong to resist but because they had lacked the forces to do so successfully.¹⁶ Hobbes likewise rejected the claim that it was 'want of strength' that led the first Christians to obey their rulers, observing that Christ had by no means been powerless to resist Pilate, given that 'he might have had twelve legions of immortal, invulnerable angels to assist him'.¹⁷ Anglicans argued against rights of resistance, even to rulers

with whose religion they disagreed, and insisted that the king could not be excommunicated by the clergy.¹⁸ Hobbes likewise denied that sovereigns could be excommunicated.¹⁹

Puritans often argued that the state has no power to impose ceremonies on people. They commonly denied that human laws bind the conscience in indifferent matters, claiming that if we are unsure of whether the magistrate's orders are congruent with God's will, we have a conscientious duty to disobey them. 'God alone', asserted the Savoy Declaration, an authoritative statement of the principles of the Independents, 'is Lord of the Conscience, and hath left it free from the Doctrines and Commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his Word, or not contained in it'.²⁰ By contrast, Anglicans asserted that human laws on matters indifferent *do* bind the conscience, claiming that we sin if we disobey them. Hooker noted the puritan view that 'human laws' 'can in no sort touch the conscience' and that 'to break and transgress them cannot make men in the sight of God culpable as sin doth', but rejected it, insisting that God requires us to be subject to the powers that be, and that this in turn entails a duty to 'show all submission towards them both by honour and obedience'.²¹ So, obeying the laws on church ceremonies was obligatory. Puritans before the Civil War had wanted the Anglican authorities to indulge the tender consciences of those who objected to the ceremonies, by not enforcing the laws against them. Jeremy Taylor argued that it is impossible to distinguish between sincere and feigned conscientious objectors, and that if we are going to exempt those from its penalties who have scruples about a law, we might as well simply abolish it.²² Hobbes was equally unsympathetic to puritan appeals to conscience, arguing that the idea that '*whatsoever a man doth against his conscience is sin*' was a 'doctrine repugnant to civil society'. He claimed that in the state of nature people should follow their own private consciences or judgements, since they had no other rule to guide them. But the whole point of entering civil society was to subordinate private to public judgement. By entering the state, individuals agreed to abide by 'the law', which 'is the public conscience'. Sin, he said, is 'nothing but the transgression of the law', and so, indeed, is 'any contempt of the legislator' even if it fell short of disobedience.²³ Disobedience to the laws requiring the use of the Anglican ceremonies in worship was therefore sinful, whatever conscience might suggest to the contrary.

Manifestly, on many key questions about the relationship between church and state, Hobbes's thinking in *Leviathan* was far closer to that of the Anglicans than to Catholics or puritans. Yet the book was bitterly attacked by leading Anglican churchmen, and for good reason. Although *Leviathan* sided with Anglicanism on some issues, it diverged sharply from it on others, as we shall see in the next section.

2. HOBBS AGAINST ANGLICANISM: THE BISHOPS AND THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CLERGY

There are many things in *Leviathan* that displeased Anglicans but also offended people of a variety of other religious complexions. Hobbes's materialism, his skepticism about anyone's claims to have received direct revelation from God – and therefore about the authority of the Bible in any place where it had not been endorsed by the state – his doubts about miracles and prophecy except where they reaffirmed the sovereign's decrees, were ill-calculated to win the warm assent of any significant Christian group. Many Protestants in Hobbes's time held that the pope was Antichrist and rejected Catholicism as a blasphemous and idolatrous religion. In the 1630s some Anglicans did indeed deny that the pope was Antichrist,²⁴ but Hobbes went much further, not only denying that the pope was Antichrist but arguing that all sovereigns 'may (as many Christian kings now do) commit the government of their subjects in matters of religion to the pope', provided that they retain their supremacy, and that the pope acts only on license from them.²⁵ This principle accorded neither with the Catholic doctrine, which taught that Christians should obey the pope whatever their civil sovereigns said, nor with non-Catholic, which denied that Christians were under the pope's authority even if their rulers supported him.

On some points Hobbes's arguments were more narrowly targeted at Anglican ideas. But although he was sharply critical of a number of Anglican tenets, his own views can (at least on occasion) be portrayed as extensions, rather than rejections, of Anglican thinking, and to this extent his later claim that he had always remained an Anglican can be supported. For instance, his own ideas on the sovereign's power in the church endorsed the Anglican doctrine of the Royal Supremacy, but went far further than Anglicans thought allowable in magnifying royal power. Indeed, they went so far that

Anglicans believed he had attempted wholly to destroy the powers and functions of the clergy, and especially of the bishops.

According to most Christian groups, ministers (or priests or pastors) possess certain powers that laymen lack, including the power to preach, to administer the sacraments and, by so doing, to confer grace upon the faithful or to confirm them in grace. These powers, it was agreed, stem directly from God and not from the civil sovereign. So too did the powers, which at least some clergy held, of ordination (through which one cleric made another a minister) and of governing the church by disciplining the disobedient through excommunication. According to Presbyterians and Independents all ministers held equal power. They denied that a few clerics – bishops, for instance – should hold power over others. Independents granted the authority to govern an individual congregation to the congregation itself, while Presbyterians granted it to the pastor and elders at the local level and to a hierarchy of elected assemblies at the regional and national levels. The Anglican Church was administered by bishops under its supreme Governor, the sovereign. According to Anglican doctrine the sovereign appointed the bishops, but their authority to govern the church by spiritual means, including the power of excommunication, was derived from God alone. Whatever temporal power the bishops had – power to fine, or imprison, for example – came to them wholly from the sovereign. Anglicans, Presbyterians and Independents (and, indeed, Catholics) all agreed that there are ecclesiastical powers (like administering the sacraments, or excommunicating) that are independent of the civil power of the state, but Anglicans differed from Presbyterians and Independents on two key points. First, Anglicans argued against the equality of ministers, claiming that some held more power than others. Of the ecclesiastical powers that Christ had established, they said, only some now belonged to all ministers, while others were restricted to the bishops. In particular, they claimed that bishops alone were empowered to ordain ministers, and to excommunicate people, and to judge who was worthy of excommunication. Second, Anglicans claimed that in any Christian country, the bishops and other clergy may exercise their ecclesiastical jurisdiction only by permission of, and in subordination to, the sovereign, who was the church's supreme Governor, while Presbyterians and Independents denied that the sovereign had any ecclesiastical authority. On the question of how some ecclesiastical powers

had come to be restricted to the bishops alone, Anglicans offered two answers. One suggested that in the very earliest times bishops and other ministers had been identical in power and function, but later the church decided for the sake of good order that it made sense to commit leadership to a small group of men, who were then distinguished as bishops. This was the position of Richard Field, a highly respected author, and Dean of Gloucester under James I.²⁶ In the decades from the late 1580s onwards, however, a second opinion began to prevail amongst Anglicans, namely that there had been bishops in the church from the very beginning, that they were the successors of the Apostles, and that episcopacy had been instituted by Christ himself as the best, if not the only possible, form of church government. This second account of the origins of bishops has come to be known as the theory of episcopacy *jure divino*, or by divine right.²⁷

In *Leviathan* Hobbes attacked divine right episcopacy head on. 'All pastors', he asserted, 'execute their charges in the right (that is, by the authority) of the civil sovereign', while 'the king and every other sovereign executeth his office of supreme pastor by immediate authority from God' (that is to say, in God's right, or *jure divino*). Bishops, he proceeded, 'ought to say, in the beginning of their mandates, *By the favour of the King's Majesty, bishop of such a diocese*, or as civil ministers, *in his Majesty's name*', but in point of fact, they styled themselves bishops by divine providence. In doing so, said Hobbes, 'they deny to have received their authority from the civil state, and slyly slip off the collar of their civil subjection'.²⁸ This criticism of the bishops of course worked equally against all other religious groups that claimed churches or ministers have spiritual or ecclesiastical functions distinct from the temporal or civil authority of the state – and so against Presbyterians, Independents and Catholics, amongst others. Hobbes also insisted that in the earliest days of Christianity there had been no difference whatever between bishops and other pastors.²⁹

The claim that bishops and other clerics derived all their powers from the sovereign had its corollary in the claim that the sovereign could do anything that a clergyman could do. For, if only clerics and not the sovereign could ordain, for example, or administer the sacraments, then it followed that their power to ordain or administer the sacraments was not derived from the sovereign, even if,

as Anglicans claimed, they might get their right to exercise these powers in a particular country from its ruler. Hobbes rejected the Anglican distinction between episcopal or clerical power, derived from God, and the right to exercise such power, derived from the sovereign, arguing that the right to ordain (or perform other ecclesiastical functions) was precisely the same as 'the right to exercise ordination'.³⁰ In *Leviathan* Hobbes spelled out that sovereigns are indeed empowered to preach, administer the sacraments, and so on, although in the Latin *Leviathan*, he oddly expressed doubts about whether this applies to female sovereigns.³¹ Hobbes eroded any significant distinction between clergy and laity, thus draining clerical power of all supernatural elements. Ordination became nothing more than appointment on the authority of the sovereign, and the sacraments no longer conferred or confirmed grace.³² The clergy lost power even to interpret the Bible independently of sovereign. No one, he declared, 'ought in the interpretation of the Scripture to proceed further than the bounds which are set by their several sovereigns'. It was allowed to 'look upon' the Scriptures and 'therein to behold the wondrous works of God, and learn to fear him', but 'to interpret them, that is, to pry into what God saith to him whom he appointeth to govern under him', was 'to transgress the bounds God hath set us, and to gaze upon God irreverently'.³³ No one could lawfully contradict the interpretation of Scripture that the sovereign approved. Bishops and other pastors had a duty to preach what the sovereign commanded. If he told them to preach Catholic doctrine (although without Catholic political ideas on papal power, of course), they would be obliged to obey. And if he told them to denounce the pope and to preach pure Calvinism, or Lutheranism, or pretty much any other -ism, they would also be obliged to obey. Most Anglicans were not willing to pursue their theory of the Royal Supremacy to quite this extreme.

Late in life, and after the Anglicans were back in power, Hobbes said that 'all that know me, know also it is my opinion, that the best government in religion is by episcopacy'.³⁴ A careful reading of what Hobbes wrote supports this claim, but also rather dilutes its force. In *Leviathan* he argued that the sovereign could appoint whatever deputies he chose to help him rule over the church and give them whatever power and whatever honorific titles he pleased – 'as, of bishops, archbishops, priests, or presbyters'.³⁵ In *Behemoth*

he argued that 'a Christian bishop is but a Christian endued with power to govern the clergy', and that 'every Christian king is not only a bishop, but an arch-bishop, and his whole dominion is his diocese'.³⁶ So a bishop was either the sovereign in person, or anyone whatever (cleric or layman, but not perhaps a woman) whom the sovereign had appointed as his deputy. It is likely that Hobbes did indeed consistently endorse episcopacy in this sense – government over the church by the sovereign or anyone appointed as his deputy. But this was not what Anglicans meant by episcopacy. It is perhaps possible to construe Hobbes's arguments in *Leviathan* as an extension of Anglican thinking on the Royal Supremacy. But it is easy to see why Anglicans saw the book as an attack on much that they held dear. It has been suggested that in his earlier political writings – *The Elements of Law* and *De Cive* – Hobbes expounded ideas that were 'extremely close to orthodox Anglicanism', while in *Leviathan* he broke drastically with his earlier views.³⁷ The final section surveys the evidence on this.

3. HOBBS'S EARLIER POLITICAL WRITINGS AND LEVIATHAN ON CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS

In *De Cive*, Hobbes argued that sovereigns are obliged to employ 'properly ordained ecclesiastics' in deciding on religious matters. Again, he declared that Christ has promised infallibility on questions of faith to the Apostles and to the clergy who have succeeded them by imposition of hands – that is to say, by ordination. He distinguished between the election and the ordination of a minister – a distinction which he abandoned in *Leviathan*. In the 1647 edition of *De Cive*, the first to be widely available, he claimed that not all presbyters had been bishops in the early church – a claim that he contradicted in *Leviathan*.³⁸ All this sounds much more conventionally Anglican than his later theory. However, these passages need to be weighed against others that point in a rather different direction. Hobbes tells us that sovereigns must employ properly ordained ecclesiastics in interpreting what Scripture says about the mysteries of faith. But the status of this obligation is unclear, for he tells us that Christ introduced no new laws, and there clearly were no laws about Christian clerics before Christ's time.³⁹ Arguably, the sovereign's 'obligation to interpret the Scriptures by means of duly ordained Ecclesiastics'

is nothing more than 'a self-imposed obligation to listen to those people to whom he had delegated some power'⁴⁰

De Cive already insisted that the civil magistrate must be obeyed in matters spiritual as much as in matters temporal.⁴¹ But although Hobbes stated that Christ had granted infallibility to the Apostles and their successors in those things necessary to salvation, he gave the clergy no law-making power and an advisory function only. Given that he claimed Scripture had in fact made very few doctrines necessary to salvation, there was also not much for them to advise on, and if sovereigns chose to ignore or reinterpret their advice when they made laws, subjects were bound to obey the laws and not the advice of the clergy. Again, it was only on matters of faith that the clergy advised, but it was the sovereign who was empowered to decide what was, and what was not a matter of faith.⁴² *De Cive* was unquestionably more circumspect and conventional in its tone than *Leviathan*, but its substantive teachings on church-state relations are arguably not so different from those of the later book. The same goes for *The Elements of Law*. Indeed, in one respect *The Elements* was perhaps more radical than *De Cive*, for it already endorsed the contention – which was later to feature in *Leviathan* – that the sovereign can perform all the functions of clerics.⁴³ In *Leviathan*, Hobbes explicitly, and with a wealth of detail, presented teachings on church-state relations that were already present in *De Cive* and *The Elements*, and which, despite their seeming conventionality, struck at the heart of Anglicanism.

NOTES

1. Thomas Hobbes, "Tho. Hobbes Malmesburiensis Vita", in *Thomae Hobbes Angli Malmesburiensis Philosophi Vita*, Carolopolis: Eleutherus Anglicus (i.e., London: William Crooke), 1681, 1–20, at pp. 7–11 discusses his reasons for writing *Leviathan*, and asserts his Anglicanism; he describes *Leviathan* as 'Opus, ut ille sperabat, concivibus suis, praesertim vero illis, qui ab Episcopis steterant' ('a work, as he hoped, that would not be displeasing to his fellow-citizens, and especially to those who had sided with the bishops'; my translation; p. 7).
2. William Fiennes, Viscount Saye and Sele, *Two Speeches in Parliament* (London: Thomas Underhill, 1641), second count, p. 10.
3. John Milton, *Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defence against Smectymnuus* (London: Thomas Underhill, 1641), 18, 19.

4. Robert Sanderson, *Two Sermons the former, concerning the right use of Christian liberty, preached at S. Pauls Crosse London. May 6. The later, concerning the perswasion of conscience, preached at a metropolitall visitation at Grantham Lincoln: Aug. 22. 1634* (London: Miles Flesher for R. Dawlman and L. Fawne, 1635), 32. Puritan and Anglican views on whether human laws bind in matters indifferent are discussed in Johann Sommerville, 'Conscience, Law, and Things Indifferent: Arguments on Toleration from the Vestiarian Controversy to Hobbes and Locke', in *Contexts of Conscience in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1700*, ed. Harald Braun and Edward Vallance (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 166–79.
5. *Lev.*, xxxi, 37, 192/242.
6. Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, ed. Ferdinand Tönnies, second edition (London: Frank Cass & Co, 1969), 60 (Part 1, Chapter 11, Section 12).
7. *Lev.*, xxxi, 38, 192/242.
8. Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book 5, Chapter 8, Section 2, in *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977–98), vol. 2, 39.
9. Joseph Hall, *Holy Decency in the Worship of God*, quoted in *Anglicanism. The Thought and Practice of the Church of England illustrated from the Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Paul Elmer More and Frank Leslie Cross (London: SPCK, 1935), 543.
10. *Lev.*, xxxviii, 24, 248/313; xli, 3, 262/328; xlii, 31, 279/349; xlii, 112, 311/388. Hobbes draws here on John 18:36, which is one of the most frequently cited biblical texts in *Leviathan*.
11. *Lev.*, xxxix, 5, 248/316.
12. Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity. Preface. Book I. Book VIII*, ed. Arthur Stephen McGrade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 133, 135, 137, 157 (Book VIII, Chapter I, Sections 4, 5, 6, VI; Chapter 3, Section 5).
13. *Lev.*, xlii, 135, 320/397.
14. *Lev.*, xlii, 118, 313/390.
15. Johann P. Sommerville, *Thomas Hobbes: Political Ideas in Historical Context*, (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1992), 115.
16. Pierre Du Moulin, *A Defence of the Catholicke Faith contained in the booke of the most mightie, and most gracious King Iames the first* (London: W. Stansby for Nathaniel Butter and Martin Clerke, 1610), 70; Richard Bancroft, *Daungerous positions and proceedings published and practised within this iland of Brytaine, vnder pretence of Reformation, and for the Presbiteriall discipline* (London: John Wolfe, 1593), sig. A4a–b; Sir John Hayward, *A reporte of a discourse concerning supreme power in affaires of religion* (London: Felix Kingston for John Hardie, 1606), 47.

17. *Lev.*, xlii, 131, 318/395.
18. J. P. Sommerville, *Royalists and Patriots. Politics and Ideology in England 1603–1640*, second edition (Harlow: Longman, 1999), 194.
19. *Lev.*, xlii, 28, 278/347–8.
20. *A Declaration of the Faith and Order owned and practised in the Congregational Churches in England; agreed upon by their Elders and Messengers in their meeting at the Savoy, Octob. 12 1658* (London: for D.L., 1659), 15.
21. Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity. Preface. Book I. Book VIII*, 188, 191 (Book 8, Chapter 6, Section 9).
22. Jeremy Taylor, *A Discourse of the Liberty of Prophesying* (London: Richard Royston, 1647), 218–19.
23. *Lev.*, xxix, 7, 168–9/212; xxix, 15, 171/215; xxvii, 1, 151/190.
24. Sommerville, *Royalists and Patriots*, 208; Christopher Hill, *Antichrist in seventeenth-century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 37–9.
25. *Lev.*, xlii, 79, 300/372.
26. Field's views are discussed in A. J. Mason, *The Church of England and Episcopacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), 60–4.
27. Discussions of the history of the theory of episcopacy by divine right include M. R. Sommerville, 'Richard Hooker and his contemporaries on episcopacy: an Elizabethan consensus', in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 35 (1984): 177–87; Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: the Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 454–61; Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans? Presbyterianism and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 88–97, 215–22.
28. *Lev.*, xlii, 71, 296–7/368.
29. *Lev.*, xlii, 54, 289/359.
30. Hobbes, *The questions concerning liberty, necessity, and chance*, in Hobbes, *The English Works*, ed. Sir William Molesworth (London: John Bohn, 11 vols., 1839–45), vol. 5, 143.
31. *Lev.*, xlii, 72, 297/368–9. At xlii, 78a, 371–2 (in the Latin version but not in the English edition), Hobbes discusses the question of whether women sovereigns can preach and administer the sacraments, and says 'I know that women are prohibited from speaking in church'. The editor (Edwin Curley) refers at this point to 1 Corinthians 14:34–5, and this is doubtless the text that Hobbes had in mind. However, there are serious problems with Hobbes's argument. First, he informs us that Christ's kingdom is not of this world and that the New Testament contains much

good advice, but no commands or prohibitions; it is therefore difficult to see how this text could constitute a prohibition. Second, Hobbes tells us that the sovereign is the interpreter of Scripture; any female sovereign who wanted to speak in church would therefore be fully authorized to interpret this text in a way that permitted her to do so, for example by construing it metaphorically as a reference not to women in the literal sense but to men of feminine courage. Third, Hobbes's proposed solution of the problem of how women can be sovereign and yet not be able themselves to perform certain functions of clerics is unsatisfactory. He says (xlii, 78a, 372) that women can hold sovereignty for 'though women cannot perform all offices, still they can appoint those who do perform them'. But if women cannot preach, then where did the clergy's power to preach (or ordain etc.) come from in Elizabeth's reign? Hobbes here seems to endorse the Anglican distinction between power and its exercise that he elsewhere rejects; see note 29 in this chapter.

32. *Lev.*, xlii, 74–8, 297–9/369–71; xxxv, 19, 221/278.
33. *Lev.*, xl, 7, 252/321.
34. Hobbes, *An Answer to Bishop Bramhall's Book*, in *The English Works*, vol. 4, 279–384, at p. 364.
35. *Lev.*, xlii, 80, 300/373.
36. Hobbes, *Behemoth or the Long Parliament*, ed. Ferdinand Tönnies (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 14.
37. Richard Tuck, *Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 85–6.
38. Hobbes, *De Cive. The Latin Version*, ed. Howard Warrender (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 279 ('Ecclesiasticos rite ordinates'), 269, 270 (17:28; 17:24).
39. *De Cive*, 258 (17:8).
40. Lodi Nauta, 'Hobbes on Religion between *The Elements of Law* and *Leviathan*: A Dramatic Change of Direction?', in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 63 (2002): 577–98, at p. 592. The points made in the final section of the present chapter are discussed in more detail at pp. 586–92 of Nauta's article, and at pp. 119–27 of Sommerville, *Thomas Hobbes*.
41. *De Cive*, 291–2 (18:13).
42. Hobbes, *De Cive*, 262–3 (17:14).
43. Nauta, 'Hobbes on Religion', 588–9, quotes *The Elements*, 167 (Part 2, Chapter 7, Section 11) to show that Hobbes already there contended that kings might 'take... upon them the ministerial priesthood' 'if it pleased them' and that they are 'not so merely laic, as not to have sacerdotal jurisdiction'. However, the idea that kings are not mere laics was expressed by some conventional Anglicans [e.g., Thomas Ireland, *The*

Oath of Allegiance (London: Nicholas Okes for Edward Aggas, 1610), sig. E3b–E4b; Samuel Collins, *Epphata to F. T.* (Cambridge: Cantrell Legge, 1617), 518], and Hobbes's statement can be read as meaning that kings could have themselves ordained as ministers if they pleased, rather than that they can exercise priestly functions even without ordination.

16 The Bible and Protestantism in *Leviathan*

Hobbes represented himself in various places in *Leviathan* as a good English Protestant. There are numerous sentences in *Leviathan* about Christianity, which, if uttered by almost anyone else in seventeenth-century England, would be understood as expressions consonant with Calvinism or Lutheranism. All scholars would agree about that. What scholars disagree about is whether Hobbes's representation was serious or not, honest or not, sarcastic or not, intentionally subversive or not. Most scholars think that he was not being honest, and many of these think that he intended his perceptive readers to see that, in context, he intended to subvert Christianity in particular and revealed religion in general. The minority view, one that I have defended, is that he was serious and honest.¹ This is not to say that he was not also ill-disposed towards various brands of Christianity, especially Roman Catholicism and Presbyterianism, and prone to sarcasm. He was. His views, in my opinion, were intended to justify a narrow space in the broad band of seventeenth-century English Christianity. Leaving aside his views about the Bible, his basic positions would have been perfectly respectable forty years earlier, during the reign of James I and VI: orthodox in doctrine, Calvinist in theology, episcopal in ecclesiology, non-puritan in liturgy, and monarchical in politics. By 'orthodox', I simply mean that he professed belief in the doctrines of the major early creeds and the Thirty-nine Articles. Although his theology conflicted with a straightforward interpretation of some of the articles, what was required at the time was profession, and the Thirty-nine Articles were meant to be flexible.² Some of Hobbes's enemies, such as Bishop John Bramhall, also departed from a straightforward reading of them.

Fortunately, the issue of what Hobbes really held about Christianity does not affect the character or organization of this chapter greatly. Its focus is on how Hobbes represented himself as regards the Bible and Protestantism, and not what he secretly believed. This chapter will be divided into three parts: (1) The Bible, (2) Theology, and (3) Ecclesiology and Liturgy. It makes sense for us to begin with Hobbes's views about the Bible because, as William Chillingworth wrote, the religion of Protestants is the Bible. Also, in addition to holding the formula *sola fides, sola gratia*, Martin Luther and John Calvin taught the doctrine of *sola scriptura*.

The similarities between Hobbes's theological pronouncements and those of either Luther or Lutherans and either Calvin or Calvinists will be discussed.³ Often Hobbes's Lutheranism or Calvinism will be justified by citing sources from Luther or Calvin, but sometimes not. Just as the views of Thomas Aquinas and Augustine of Hippo do not exactly coincide with the views of Thomists and Augustinians, those of Luther and Calvin do not coincide with those of Lutherans and Calvinists. When there is a significant difference between the person and his followers, this will be noted. In Section 3, I will discuss Hobbes's views about worship and church government. So I distinguish between theology, ecclesiology, and liturgy.

I. THE BIBLE

Perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of Protestant biblical interpretation was its emphasis on literal interpretation. The literal meaning of a text was the meaning the author intended the text to have, not necessarily the meaning that the words had when the author wrote them. This criterion avoided the absurdity of being committed to interpreting Jesus' remark, 'I am the vine,' as meaning that Jesus is a climbing woody-stemmed plant. What Jesus meant was that he was like a vine.

The emphasis on the literal meaning was a reaction against the complex method of interpretation practiced by Roman Catholic exegetes, a method that few laymen understood. The literal method was motivated by two goals. One was to empower laymen to interpret the Bible. The other goal was to deflate the elaborate and implausible metaphysics generated by Roman Catholic theologians. A good

example of the implausible metaphysics arises from the doctrine of the Real Presence, according to which the bread and wine of consecration become the body and blood of Jesus⁴ (*Lev.*, xlv, 11, 337–8/416–17). Since typically many pieces of bread were consecrated at the same time, it followed that Jesus was in many places at the same time, which contradicts the idea that one object cannot be wholly in more than one place at a time, not to mention the fact that the bread and wine do not change their appearance (*EW*, VI, 216).

Hobbes's basic view about the composition of the Old Testament is that it was written by many people, whose names are unknown to us, over a long period of time, long after the occurrence of the events they described. Concerning the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, the single most important claim that Hobbes makes is that Moses was not the author of all of it, contrary to the standard view. Although Hobbes was not the first to make this claim, he was the first European author to argue the case in print. One of these arguments is that since the end of Deuteronomy contains an account of Moses' death, Moses could not have written it. Also the phrasing suggests that the account was written long after his death. The Authorized Version says, 'but no man knoweth of his Sepulcher unto this day' (*Deut.* 34:6). The past tense would not have been used unless Moses were already dead,⁵ and the phrase 'unto this day' would not have been used unless a long period of time elapsed between the burial and the account. Similar phrasing in other parts of the Pentateuch make it clear that Moses did not write them either. At *Genesis* 12:6, the text reads, 'And Abraham passed through the land to the place of *Sichem*, unto the plain of *Moreh*, and the *Canaanite* was then in the land.' The phrase, 'was then in the land,' is appropriate only if the Canaanite was no longer in the land. Since the Canaanites were slaughtered by the Israelites only after the death of Moses, he could not have written that passage. Finally, it is clear that the author of the Pentateuch relied on at least one other, more ancient book for his account, *The Book of the Wars of the Lord* (*Lev.*, xxxiii, 4, 252/200). Hobbes uses similar linguistic arguments that the books of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel were written long after the events they recorded. Much of both the books of Kings and of Chronicles was written long after the events described since they describe events that span more than five hundred years. Although Hobbes ignores the possibility that these books were written contemporaneously with the events

over a period of five hundred years, his conclusion about these books is correct.

Hobbes does not hold that Moses wrote none of the Pentateuch. Rather, Moses wrote that part of the Pentateuch that 'he is said there to have written, as for example, the Volume of the Law, which is contained... in the 11th of Deuteronomy, and the following chapters to the 27th' (*Lev.*, xxxiii, 5, 200/252–3). About the authorship of the Old Testament in general, Hobbes correctly says that this 'has not been made evident by any sufficient testimony or other history (which is the only proof of matter of fact)' (*Lev.*, xxxiii, 3, 251/200).

Hobbes's judgement about the authorship of the New Testament is different. The authors 'lived all in less than an age after Christ's ascension, and had all of them seen our Saviour or been his disciples, except St. *Paul* and St. *Luke*; and consequently, whatsoever was written by them is as ancient as the time of the apostles' (*Lev.*, xxxiii, 20, 203/256). That is, the events of the life of Jesus and the early Christian Church are much better attested than the events of the Jewish Church.

Some scholars writing before Hobbes had cast doubt on the accuracy of the extant texts of the Bible. Either through normal human error or through the perfidy of the Jews, the current text, it was claimed, had been falsified in key respects. Hobbes rejects this reasoning with a jibe at clerics. His argument is that all agree that the text of the Bible was in the care of priests, first Jewish priests, then Christian ones. Given this fact, if anything would have been altered in the text, it would have been the numerous anticlerical statements in the Bible. But they were not: 'I see not therefore any reason to doubt, but that the Old and New Testament, as we have them now, are the true registers of those things which were done and said by the prophets and apostles' (*Lev.*, xxxiii, 20, 204/257).

Hobbes was notorious for being a materialist and for denying the immortality of the soul. The reflex opinion of his contemporaries and ours is that this must be a sign of atheism. It is not. As Hobbes observes, the Bible does not talk about the soul as an immaterial substance, independent of the body. In the book of Job, it is clear that there is no immortality. Human beings are worse off than trees. If a tree is cut down, its roots can generate new growth, but if a human being is cut down he 'wasteth away' (*Lev.*, xxxviii, 4, 241/305, quoting Job 14:7). Hobbes defended his view biblically and challenged

his opponent John Bramhall to produce examples from the Bible that contradicted it (*EW*, IV, 350–5). In fact, Hobbes is right about this and most of the other claims he makes about the Bible and the misinterpretations of it that arose due to the influences of pagan philosophy.

Even more irritating to his contemporaries than his claim about the soul was his claim that God was a body. Hobbes gives a linguistic analysis of the many uses of the word 'spirit' in the Bible. Sometimes it means a special grace, sometimes zeal, and sometimes extraordinary understanding (*Lev.*, xxxiv, 6–9, 207–9/263–4). Sometimes it refers to a substance, and when it does that substance is a body. For example, the verse, 'The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters' (Gen. 1:2), means that God was moving. The only things that move are bodies. Therefore, God is a body (cf., *Lev.*, xxxiv, 5, 263/208). Here again Protestant literalism vindicated Hobbes's materialism. The same kind of literalism allowed him to deny that angels were immaterial (*Lev.*, xxxiv, 17–24, 211–14/266–70). His treatment of the angels is interesting because most of it considers the many senses of the word 'angel' in the Old Testament. Etymologically, an angel is a messenger; so to assert that someone is an angel is not thereby to assert that the person is a supernatural being. Sometimes 'angels' are called 'men'. Sometimes they are visions in dreams. Sometimes 'angel' is used to denote God himself (*Lev.*, xxxiv, 20, 212/267–8). To the objection that God and angels have to be immaterial bodies, Hobbes responded that the great Church Father Tertullian thought that only bodies existed and hence that God was a body, and was not condemned for his view (*EW*, IV, 305, 382–3, 429).

One of the sensible consequences of Hobbes's materialism is that it explains the importance of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. If humans were souls and death was a release of the person from the body, then there would be no reason to retrieve one's body at the end of the world. The resurrection would be atavistic.

The doctrine of the resurrection should be paired with another, the location of the kingdom of God. Just as many people wanted their soul to be released from their body, many wanted to leave earth in order to go to the kingdom of God. Hobbes disagrees:

Concerning the place wherein men shall enjoy that eternal life which Christ hath obtained for them, the texts . . . seem to make it on earth. For if, as in Adam, all die, that is, have forfeited paradise and eternal life on earth, even

so in Christ all shall be made alive, then all men shall be made to live on earth; for else the comparison were not proper. (*Lev.*, xxxviii, 3, 239/302, commenting on 1 Cor. 15:21–2)

Moreover, God refers to his kingdom as Zion; Zion is in Jerusalem and hence on earth; therefore, God's kingdom is on earth. And John saw the 'new Jerusalem' coming to earth (*Lev.*, xxxviii, 3, 239/302, commenting on Rev. 21:2; see also *Lev.*, xxxviii, 18–24, 246–8/311–13). Hobbes sees no strong evidence for holding that the kingdom of heaven is 'in another higher heaven called *coelum empyreum*' (*Lev.*, xxxviii, 4, 240/303–4; cf. *EW*, IV, 347).

Given that the Bible does not talk about immortal souls, where did that pervasive belief of Christian theology come from? According to Luther and Calvin, Christian theology and doctrine were corrupted by the importation of ancient pagan ideas into Christianity. Hobbes agrees (*Lev.*, xli, 8, 265/332; xlv, 3, 334/412; xlv, 16, 340/420; xlv, 33–38, 363–6/451–3). It is Plato, not Moses, who taught the existence of an immortal soul. And the tainting of Christian doctrine by ancient pagan ideas is not restricted to the doctrine of the soul. The authentic doctrine of hell was corrupted by the Greek and Roman concepts of Hades, and the inferno (*Lev.*, xxxviii, 6, 305–6/242–3). This is not to say that the Christian doctrine of hell is simple and unambiguous (*Lev.*, xxxviii, 11–14, 242–3/308–9). The doctrine of Satan and devils was corrupted by pagan doctrines about daemons or demons (*Lev.*, viii, 25, 37/43–4; xxxiv, 15–18, 210–11/265–7; xlvii, 16, 383/480).

2. THEOLOGY

I am using 'theology' in a technical sense. Theological beliefs or propositions are either statements that explain or elaborate on propositions of orthodoxy, or faith more generally. Suppose that 'Angels exist' is an orthodox proposition. Then 'There are nine choirs of angels' is an elaboration of that proposition. One need not believe that there are nine choirs of angels, but people often do, because they like to have their beliefs filled out in more detail than their creeds provide. It often happens that a theological statement that is not properly a part of orthodoxy is often called 'orthodox' because it is widely accepted by a community. Conversely, if it is widely

rejected, the community may call it 'heterodox'. But this way of talking is different from my own in this chapter. As mentioned earlier, 'orthodoxy' is being restricted to the doctrines of the early creeds and the Thirty-nine Articles.

As for explanatory theological propositions, suppose that (1) 'Three persons are God' is an orthodox proposition and that neither (2) 'Persons are rational substances' and (3) 'Persons are representatives of some entity' are. Either (2) or (3) may explain (1). Obviously, it is easy to confuse theological propositions with orthodox (or heterodox) ones or to disagree about whether a certain proposition is part of orthodoxy or not. Also, being an explanatory statement is relative to the proposition to be explained. So a statement that explains some proposition may itself be explained by some other proposition.

Concerning specific theological propositions, let's begin with the topic of free will. There are strong Lutheran elements in Hobbes's work on this topic.⁶ Luther, in debate with Erasmus, had denied that the human will was free, and Hobbes quotes some of these passages with approval (*EW*, V, 298). Although the denial of free will is even stronger in the Reformed Churches than it is in Lutheranism, as Hobbes said, they had been 'instructed by Luther' (*EW*, V, 1; see also 265).

The denial of free will follows from a more basic proposition of Christianity, the proposition that God is the cause of all things. This view underlies the first sentence of 'The Introduction' of *Leviathan*: 'God hath made and governs the world' (Introduction, I, 3/1; see also *EW*, V, 246). As he said elsewhere, 'if God make every thing, every thing must necessarily be' (*EW*, V, 222). The will is no exception to divine universal causality (*Lev.*, xxi, 4, 108/137). It follows that God is the cause of the evil actions that people perform, but this does not entail that God has done anything wrong, according to Hobbes. To sin is to break a law. God is not subject to the law because he makes them. So, the sinner breaks the law, but God does not because he cannot (*EW*, V, 215, 297–8).

A further consequence of the doctrine of God's universal causality is that the salvation of a person is determined by God. Luther expressed this view in his formula, *sola fide, sola gratia*: people are saved by faith and by grace alone. Similarly, Hobbes wrote, that the only thing necessary for salvation is faith, specifically, faith that Jesus is the Christ or Messiah (e.g., *Lev.*, xliii, 3, 322/398–9; xliii,

II, 324/402), and 'faith is a gift of God' (*Lev.*, xliii, 7, 323/400). It is not caused by the person who receives it. The ordinary, immediate cause of faith is belief that the Bible is the word of God (*Lev.*, xliii, 7, 323/400).

The idea that salvation comes by faith alone arises in contrast with the idea that salvation comes from good works. Good works are things like visiting the sick, clothing the naked, and giving alms to the poor. In explaining the difference between the two ideas (*sola fide* and good works), it is common to say that *nothing* a person does merits grace, but this universal negation, 'nothing', is stronger than the denial that good works do not merit grace. There are things that people do⁷ that do not fall into any of the categories of good works, sins or morally neutral actions. Many, if not most, Protestants adhere to the idea that a person must want to be saved or pray to be saved or something similar as a preliminary to being saved. This preliminary desire or action is not a good work, but it is not nothing at all either. Hobbes's version of this Protestant idea is that humans can and ought to try or endeavor, that is, to desire salvation. This desire does not in fact fulfill the requirements of God's law, but God acts as if it does: 'But a man is then also said to be justified when his plea, though in itself insufficient, is accepted, as when we plead our will, our endeavour to fulfil the law, and repent us of our failings, and God accepteth it for the performance itself. *Lev.*, xliii, 7, 323/400... [T]herefore faith... makes good our plea' (*Lev.*, xliii, 21, 330/408).

Still another consequence of God's universal causality is that God determines who will be damned, just as he determines who will be saved. This is Hobbes's view but not Luther's. Luther was unable to accept that a merciful God could determine who would go to hell. While God causes the elect to go to heaven, the person who is damned causes himself to go to hell by sinning. Since all humans are sinners and anyone who sins deserves hell, all humans deserve hell, but God freely and graciously saves some but not others.

Hobbes's position that God determines both who will be saved and who will be damned for all eternity has the technical name of 'prelapsarian double predestination'. It is 'prelapsarian' because whether a person was going to heaven or hell was settled even before the 'lapse' of Adam and Eve. This contrasts with the postlapsarian view, according to which people came to be predestined only after the sin of Adam and Eve. On this latter view, if Adam and Eve had

not sinned, everyone would have been saved. The predestination is 'double' because both elect and damned are predestined.

Someone might claim that Hobbes's so-called predestination is not really predestination because it follows from his determinism. This claim is seriously flawed. First, Hobbes's determinism, like any other determinism, asserts that every event has a cause and only events are causes. This does not entail that some people go to heaven and some to hell. The ultimate heavenly or hellish destination for humans requires several additional premises specific to Christianity, and Hobbes committed himself to these distinctively Christian propositions. Second, the fact that Hobbes's deterministic physics 'conveniently' fits the Calvinist doctrine of predestination provides no evidence at all that Hobbes professed predestination only because of his scientific views. One would expect a religious, scientific philosopher to get his scientific and religious views to line up with one another. What would be odd would be a religious, scientific philosopher whose views about science and religion did not fit.

Luther's view is intended to take some of the sting out of the standard view that the damned suffer for eternity in hell. If going to hell is their own fault, why should anyone feel sorry for them? Whether Hobbes felt sorry for the damned or not, he did think that eternal suffering for a sin committed by a creature with finite knowledge and subject to all sorts of desires is incompatible with the mercy of God. He does not think that God feels sorry for the damned because God does not have any feelings at all. To attribute feelings to God is to anthropomorphize him. Rather, it is the logical discrepancy between infinite mercy and eternal suffering that affects Hobbes's thinking. So Hobbes appeals, again, to the literal meaning of various passages in Scripture, to resolve the problem. About St. Paul's view that evil people suffer a second death, Hobbes says,

For though the Scripture be clear for an universal resurrection, yet we do not read that to any of the reprobate is promised an eternal life. . . . [N]or can the name of *second death* be applied to those that can never die but once. And although in metaphorical speech a calamitous life everlasting may be called an everlasting death, yet it cannot well be understood of a *second death*. (*Lev.*, xxxviii, 14, 244–5/309; see also xlv, 14, 339–40/418–19)

Hobbes's views about hell and the second death are novel and hence not shared by his Protestant contemporaries, but they have come to be adopted by some twentieth-century Protestants.

Hobbes speaks about the fires of hell ambiguously. Sometimes he says that they are figurative, and sometimes he suggests that they are literal (*Lev.*, xxxviii, 8–14, 242–3/307–9). When they are literal, he maintains that they are eternal. But the eternity of the fires of hell does not entail that any one person will suffer in them eternally. In the first edition of *Leviathan* (the Head), Hobbes thought that the eternal fires would be stoked with the evil offspring eternally generated by other evil offspring. But this idea was deleted in the second and third editions (the Bear and the Ornaments), and Hobbes is almost certainly responsible for it (*Lev.*, xlv, 29, 346/428–9; see also xxxviii, 14, 245/309). Substituting the eternal pain of a finite number of people for the noneternal pain of an infinite number of people is not good enough.

Now there is something odd about Hobbes's feeling that he needs to undermine belief in the proposition that the damned suffer for eternity in hell. On his view the honorific profession, 'God is infinitely merciful', is consistent with the statement, 'The damned suffer eternally in hell', precisely because the profession of God's infinite mercy is not a statement, not literally true, but a laudation. On his view, only existence, and perhaps omnipotence and infinity can be truly and literally predicated of God. Everything else that humans say about God, and this includes 'God is infinitely merciful', ought to be said as a way of honoring him and not with the purpose of describing him.

Hobbes held this view about religious language for two reasons. One is that he thought it was irreverent to make God an object of science. The other is that he thought, along with many other seventeenth-century Calvinists, that very little can truly be said about God because he is infinite. Everything that humans know is finite. When they do not know something because it exceeds their comprehension, they say that that thing is infinite, whether what exceeds their comprehension is a set of numbers or God. Human words fail to describe God because humans, have no proper ideas of him. God is incomprehensible.

Of course, one might picture God as a big old man, with a long white beard, floating among the clouds. But this picture is not an idea of God in the technical sense of 'idea' that Hobbes employs. There has to be some causal and representational relation between a human being and an object in order for that person to have an idea of the thing, and humans have no such ideas of God.

Let's now return to the issue of human salvation. Granted that God determines who goes to heaven, did Christ die for all people, or only for the elect? Hobbes agreed with Luther and with standard Calvinists, according to the bracing doctrines of Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints, that Christ died only for the elect, in contrast with Calvin himself.⁸ Next, what was the character of redemption? Does justice in the sense of merit enter into the explanation of the way that Jesus' death merited salvation for humans? Roman Catholic theologians thought that it did. Hobbes, like other Protestants, emphasized that it did not (cf. *Lev.*, xiv, 17, 67–8/83–4).⁹ The work of salvation was purely the result of God's mercy:

To the *office* of a *Redeemer* (that is, of one that payeth the ransom of sin, which ransom is death) it appertaineth that he was sacrificed, and thereby bore upon his own head, and carried away from us, our iniquities, in such sort as God had required. Not that the death of one man, though without sin, can satisfy for the offences of all men, in the rigour of justice, but in the mercy of God, that ordained such sacrifices for sin, as he was pleased in his mercy to accept. (*Lev.*, xli, 2, 261/327)

Those who thought that redemption involved an element of justice often used the word 'satisfaction'. By his death Jesus satisfied God by paying the price of sin. Hobbes rejected both the language of satisfaction and 'the price of sin' and adhered to the biblical word 'ransom'.

By this ransom is not intended a satisfaction for sin, equivalent to the offence, which no sinner for himself, nor righteous man can ever be able to make for another; the damage a man does to another he may make amends for by restitution or recompense; but sin cannot be taken away by recompense, for that were to make the liberty to sin a thing vendible. (*Lev.*, xxxviii, 25, 248/313)

Hobbes's point is profound. If Jesus had paid the price of sin in the sense of satisfying it, then sin would be a commodity, something that could be bought, and there is no fault in buying something for a price. To think of sin being bought is to subvert the idea that it is an injustice.

Hobbes's treatment of redemption fits more generally into his idea that two things are required for salvation: faith and obedience. If human beings had obeyed God from the beginning, then faith would not be necessary. Through disobedience all bad things came into the

world. Conversely, all good things come into the world through obedience, specifically, obedience to the sovereign. This may look like a secularization of religion – and to some extent it is – but since Hobbes claims that obedience to the sovereign is what God desires ('Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's'), it is not completely secular.

It may seem that it is impossible for humans to satisfy the requirement of obedience in the postlapsarian world. But Hobbes interprets the requirement broadly:

The obedience required at our hands by God, that accepteth in all our actions the will for the deed, is a serious endeavour to obey him, and is called also by all such names as signify that endeavour. And therefore, obedience is sometimes called . . . by the name of righteousness . . . and sometimes by the name of *repentance*. . . . [I]f God should require perfect innocence, there could no flesh be saved. (*Lev.*, xliii, 4, 322/399)

The other half of the requirements for salvation, faith, fits nicely with what Hobbes said about obedience. To satisfy the requirement of faith is simple. Relying on the first epistle of St. John, chapter 5, verse 1, 'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God', Hobbes says that belief that Jesus is the Christ is all that is necessary for salvation. Some people objected that this is too simple and that more is required. Hobbes again relied on the Bible to defend his view. Jesus said that his yoke is easy and his burden light and that one of the thieves crucified with Jesus learned enough about Jesus before dying to get into heaven. However, sometimes Hobbes claimed that all the other truths that are required for heaven are entailed by the proposition that Jesus is the Christ (*Lev.*, xliii, 19, 328–9/407).

3. ECCLESIOLOGY AND LITURGY

By 'liturgy', I mean the proper way that God is to be worshipped. Hobbes distinguishes the internal act of valuing something, honoring, from the external act, of showing that honor, worship (*Lev.*, xxxi, 8, 188–9/237). Concerning liturgy, the basic fight in seventeenth-century England was between puritans and nonpuritans. The puritans wanted a spare liturgy. They typically objected to the use of an altar because of its associations with sacrifice and the priesthood. They detested the use of vestment by priests and ministers,

statues, crucifixes, and anything else that appealed to human sensibilities. They thought such aspects of worship anthropomorphized God. Hobbes was a moderate nonpuritan. He objected to the theology that underlay the use of an altar and the concomitant view of priests as mediators between God and human beings. Hobbes thought the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist was idolatrous, analogous to the claim of the Egyptians that leeks and onions were 'not very leeks and onions, but a divinity under their species or likeness' (*Lev.*, xlv, 11, 338/417; see also xlv, 24, 361/447). He did not accept the 'real presence' of the body of Jesus in the Eucharist any more than Calvin did. His view, similar to that of Zwingli, is that the Eucharist is a sign and commemoration of Christ's redemptive act (*EW*, IV, 42; see also *Lev.*, xlv, 11, 338/416–17).

While Hobbes objected to the anthropomorphization of God, he did not think a rich liturgy necessarily did this. A rich liturgy results from the fact that worship¹⁰ must follow 'those rules of honour that reason dictateth to be done by the weak to the more potent men', and potent men always require elaborate ceremonies for themselves. Although some ceremonies are arbitrary, or culturally specific, 'some signs of honour' are naturally worshipful, for example, 'prayers, thanks, and obedience' (*Lev.*, xxxi, 10, 189/238). These signs should be 'every one in his kind the best, and most significant of honour'. Prayers and thanksgiving should consist of words and phrases that are 'beautiful and well-composed'. Otherwise God is not honored as much as he could be (*Lev.*, xxxi, 34, 192/241). These natural signs are 'taught us by the light of nature' (*Lev.*, xxxi, 14, 190/239).

The purpose of worshipping God is not to increase the power of God, since he is omnipotent. Rather, people have a duty to worship him. And it is the people worshipping, not God being worshipped, who benefit from it (*Lev.*, xxxi, 13, 239, 189–90/239 n. 7).

The issue of worship is closely tied to ecclesiology, the theory about how the church should be governed. The English Protestants who wanted a rich liturgy favored an episcopal church, that is, one governed by bishops. Those who wanted a spare liturgy generally detested not merely individual bishops but the episcopacy.¹¹ These opponents supported one or the other of two options. The Presbyterians wanted a national church founded on a bottom up organization. Representatives of congregations would be sent to a classis,

which would elect representatives to a synod, which would elect representatives to a general assembly. If Presbyterianism were the national church, the general assembly would have authority over all Christians, including the monarch. This was reason enough for Hobbes to hate the presbyterian system.

The other option was Independency.¹² The Independents were content to let each congregation rule itself. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes says with what I think is an air of resignation, although others think it is with a spirit of enthusiasm:

And so we are reduced to the independency of the primitive Christians, to follow Paul, or Cephas, or Apollos, every man as he liketh best. Which, if it be without contention, and without measuring the doctrine of Christ by our affection to the person of his minister . . . is perhaps the best. (*Lev.*, xlvii, 20, 385/482)

Resignation, rather than enthusiasm, is suggested by the allusion to 1 Corinthians 1:10–13 in virtue of the phrase, ‘Paul, or Cephas, or Apollos’. In that epistle, Paul is condemning the quarrelling that has arisen among different Christian factions. Similarly, the restrictions expressed by, ‘if it be without contention’ and ‘without measuring . . . by our affection’, and finally, the ‘perhaps’, all indicate reservations about the intrinsic desirability of Independency. This consequence conflicts with the received view of the time, that England was a Christian nation. Finally, if Hobbes really thought Independency was the best form of worship, he would have attended an independent congregation. Instead, during the Interregnum, he went out of his way to attend a liturgy according to the rubric of the outlawed Church of England.

What Hobbes endorsed was uniform worship. Earlier in *Leviathan* he had said:

seeing a commonwealth is but one person, it ought also to exhibit to God but one worship, which then it doth when it commandeth it to be exhibited by private men publicly. And this in public worship, the property whereof is to be uniform; for those actions that are done differently by different men cannot be said to be a public worship. And therefore, where many sorts of worship be allowed, proceeding from the different religions of private men, it cannot be said there is any public worship, nor that the commonwealth is of any religion at all. (*Lev.*, xxxi, 37, 192/242)

Since Independency did not require uniformity and in fact 'many sorts of worship' were allowed in the Commonwealth, it follows from Hobbes's view that England in the 1650s was not of 'any religion at all'.

Calvinism is often thought to entail Presbyterianism. Although (virtually) all Presbyterians were Calvinists, many bishops and theologians of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England were Calvinists and not Presbyterians. Calvinism, as we have indicated, was associated with such theological issues as predestination, redemption, and grace, not with how the Church was governed, and did not necessarily require the abolition of the episcopacy. Calvin himself accepted the episcopacy in England and recommended it for Poland.¹³

4. CONCLUSION

Several other topics relevant to Hobbes's Protestantism cannot be described here, for example, his treatment of the threefold office of Christ – redeemer, counselor and king – his critique of Robert Bellarmine's defense of papal infallibility and his view about miracles. Although Hobbes was not in every way strictly either a Lutheran or a Calvinist, he did represent himself as in large agreement with them and as being within the Protestant tradition of his time.

NOTES

1. A. P. Martinich, *The Two Gods of Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
2. Peter Newman Brooks, 'Thirty-nine Articles of Religion', in *The Encyclopedia of Protestantism*, vol. 4, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1886–9; see also *EW*, IV, 355.
3. The meaning of the word 'theology', the organizing concept of Section 2, is used by me in a technical sense. Roughly, it means propositions about God and creatures in relation to God; alternatively, it means propositions about God and humans other than ones involving ecclesiology and liturgy. More will be said about 'theology' in Section 2.
4. Page references to *Leviathan* are to chapter and paragraph, followed by the page numbers in the Head edition of 1651, followed by the page numbers in the edition prepared by Edwin Curley, for example, *Lev.*, xxxi, 9, 189/238. References to Hobbes's other works are to the edition of William Molesworth, and will be given as *EW* and *OL* for *English Works*

- and *Latin Works*, respectively, followed by volume and page number (e.g., *EW*, IV, 234 and *OL*, IV, 234).
5. One might object that God could have told Moses what would happen to his grave. The proper response to this is that in this case, the account should have been in the future, not the past, tense.
 6. Hobbes praised Luther in several works, such as *The Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity and Chance*, where he says that Luther was 'the first beginner of our deliverance from the servitude of the Romish clergy', and that he was 'always very much revered'. Quoted from J. Overhoff, 'The Lutheranism of Thomas Hobbes', *History of Political Thought* 18 (1997): 604.
 7. Or ways that people feel.
 8. R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 13–14.
 9. For example, Stephen Marshall in *A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons*, given November 17, 1640, complained that Roman Catholics think of God 'not as a mercifull giver, but as a just Judge' (p. 23).
 10. Hobbes wrote that there were three parts to worship: 'praise, magnifying, and blessing'. Praising and magnifying 'are signified both by words and actions' (*Lev.*, xxxi, 9, 238/189).
 11. Many supporters of episcopacy in the early 1640s thought that the institution needed to be reformed because they thought many bishops were corrupt and a scandal to the Church.
 12. In theology, both Presbyterians and Independents would typically be Calvinists, a notable exception being John Milton, who believed in free will.
 13. John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 217.

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17 The 1668 Appendix and Hobbes's Theological Project

INTRODUCTION: PLACING THE 1668 APPENDIX IN CONTEXT

The possibility of a translation into Latin or French of *Leviathan*, his masterpiece of political philosophy, had engaged the attention of Thomas Hobbes not long after its appearance in English in 1651.¹ Du Verdu gave various, and not necessarily consistent, reports of such an undertaking. Writing in 1654 to say he was making an interlinear translation and again in 1655 to express his hope of translating *Leviathan* into French, in 1656 and again in 1657 Du Verdu wrote with a promise of an exact translation.² In 1657 De Martel wrote seeking a translation,³ followed by du Bosc in 1659, the latter noting, 'All y^e learned men I know desire that Leviathan were in French or Latine'.⁴ Similar requests followed.⁵

This expression of interest from non-Anglophone admirers might suggest that the eventual volume of 1668 would be aimed at a readership significantly different from that addressed in 1651, and to an extent this is true, as Hobbes himself indicated in later noting that he had omitted from the 1668 volume 'some such passages as strangers are not concerned in'.⁶ The clear focus of the earlier text had been on the England and Englishmen of the Civil War, particularly viewed in the light of the war's climax, the execution of the king in 1649. Hobbes himself made clear in the book's 'Review and Conclusion' that *Leviathan* was in a sense an occasional piece whose pressing concerns had forced him to interrupt his scientific studies:

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Prof. Patricia Springborg for her encouragement and many kindnesses as this essay moved to completion.

And thus I have brought to an end my Discourse of Civil and Ecclesiastical Government, occasioned by the disorders of the present time, without partiality, without application, and without other design, than to set before men's eyes the mutual relation between protection and obedience; of which the condition of human nature, and the laws divine, (both natural and positive) require an inviolable observation. And though in the revolution of states, there can be no very good constellation for truths of this nature to be born under, (as having an angry aspect from the dissolvers of an old government, and seeing but the backs of them that erect a new,) yet I cannot think it will be condemned at this time, either by the public judge of doctrine, or by any that desires the continuance of public peace. And in this hope I return to my interrupted speculation of bodies natural; wherein, (if God give me health to finish it,) I hope the novelty will as much please, as in the doctrine of this artificial body it useth to offend. For such truth, as opposeth no man's profit, nor pleasure, is to all men welcome.⁷

Later, he commented: 'The cause of my writing that book, was the consideration of what the ministers before, and in the beginning of, the civil war, by their preaching and writing did contribute thereto'.⁸ Thus, the immediate situation of the Civil War and its aftermath gave rise to the book, a fact that does not yet however tell us who Hobbes's intended audience was.

The English *Leviathan's* ideal reader is made evident in its charged style⁹ and in the level of discussion at which it is pitched. For example, in discussing Aristotle's theory of being and language, he asks his reader's indulgence for a perhaps unexpected complexity: 'But to what purpose (may some man say) is such subtlety in a work of this nature, where I pretend to nothing but what is necessary to the doctrine of government and obedience?'¹⁰ Clearly, the book's audience was not to be the learned, who could be expected to follow a complicated argument in Latin, but the educated lay reader, whose conscience Hobbes could hope to turn to seeking peace in the context of the Engagement Controversy.¹¹ As he said in 1656 in a dispute with the mathematician Wallis, 'But as it is, I believe [*Leviathan*] hath framed the minds of a thousand gentlemen to a conscientious obedience to present government, which otherwise would have wavered in that point'.¹²

If, with respect both to the origins of its concerns and to its audience, the English text was deeply engaged in the pressing matters of the English civil wars and their immediate aftermath, much

remained unchanged in the argumentation of the later text, not least in those sections that referred to the English *Leviathan* indirectly or by way of discussion and even correction.¹³ This need not surprise us. No matter how intently an author turns his or her attention to a question of pressing concern and to the audience and situation to be addressed, such a task is possible only from within that author's preexisting ensemble of beliefs, skills and habits of mind, his or her mental furniture, so to speak. This is to say, an author's intellectual development remains the necessary prior possibility for any intervention such as the one that Hobbes sought to make in 1651. Further, any interpretive approach that dissolves a speech act into the circumstances of its reception obviates this prior horizon of authorial intention and to that extent remains incomplete. It remains then to relate that intention to the interpretive possibilities opened through each thinker's placement in the broader, antecedent horizon of his or her era. In the case of Hobbes, the ideal characteristics of his political thought had found expression in two prior works, *The Elements of Law* of 1640 and the two editions of *De Cive*, 1642 and 1647. These works, together with the two versions of *Leviathan*, that is, his four treatises on government, surely show change, growth and development, but they also show deep continuities of belief and approach.¹⁴

This assertion is confirmed by the extensive Appendix which Hobbes added to the Latin text in substitution for the earlier 'Review and Conclusion'. Though often taken to represent its author's admission of defeat on major points, the Appendix in fact reflects abiding continuities in perspective and objective with the earlier texts. Self-consciously retrospective, although it proposes some changes, it is much more defense, elaboration and even attack than it is retraction and capitulation. The picture of the author as chastened or prudentially repentant finds little or no support in the Appendix. Instead, it was Hobbes's very late attempt to press home several particular points making up his book's much larger indictment of such contemporary political thinking as made civil war more likely and threatened stable government in England and elsewhere. In this, it forms part of a general and continuing defense of his thought, whether based on ideal-historical grounds, as in the Appendix, or on historical grounds, as in his contemporaneous history of the Civil War, *Behemoth*.

As we saw earlier,¹⁵ Hobbes described *Leviathan* as a discourse of civil and ecclesiastical government, in which he arraigned the clerics

for their role in bringing about the disaster of civil war. Central to his case was the claim that 'ministers' had sought an administration in government independent of the civil power, and there was ample evidence for this from both the Anglican and Presbyterian clergies.¹⁶ But, he developed his arguments against both on a seemingly inapposite ground, namely, an extended criticism of the errors and misdeeds of Roman Catholic prelates and writers, chief among them, the eminent Catholic polemicist Bellarmine.¹⁷ He evidently thought that, on the one hand, he could assimilate Anglicanism, at least in its Laudian, Arminian, 'free will' guise, to Catholicism, and, on the other, that he could analogize Presbyterianism to Catholicism through his condemnation of spiritual coercion.¹⁸

This attempt to undermine Anglican and especially Presbyterian claims to independence from constituted, sovereign authority through a critique of Catholic theology likely drew its intellectual origins from the particulars of a debate over free will that Hobbes had in France with John Bramhall (1594–1663), Bishop of Derry, probably in the first half of 1645 at the request of the Marquis of Newcastle, and probably taking place at the nobleman's Parisian residence.¹⁹ Through some mishaps and misunderstandings, their initial oral exchange was memorialized in writing and then was extended into a series of books, beginning in 1655 with Bramhall's *A Defence of the True Liberty of Human Actions from Antecedent or Extrinsic Necessity*, which quoted Hobbes's prior *Of Liberty and Necessity*. Hobbes responded the following year with *Questions concerning Liberty, Necessity and Chance, Clearly Stated and Debated between Dr. Bramhall, Bishop of Derry, and Thomas Hobbes, of Malmesbury*. Bramhall then brought out his *Castigation of Hobbes's Animadversions* and *The Catching of Leviathan the Great Whale* in 1658. Following Bramhall's death, Hobbes's final word, *An Answer to Bishop Bramhall*, though written in 1668, appeared posthumously. Throughout this exchange, the themes treated in *Leviathan* were taken up and debated, Hobbes once again criticizing the Anglican and Presbyterian clergies by reference to Catholic errors.

It was a strategy of argumentation that he also used to considerable effect in *Behemoth*, in explaining how England had been seduced into rebellion and war:

A. The seducers were of divers sorts. One sort were ministers; ministers, as they called themselves, of Christ; and sometimes, in their sermons to the

people, God's ambassadors; pretending to have a right from God to govern every one his parish, and their assembly the whole nation.

Secondly, there were a very great number, though not comparable to the other, which notwithstanding that the Pope's power in England, both temporal and ecclesiastical, had been by Act of Parliament abolished, did still retain a belief that we ought to be governed by the Pope, whom they pretended to be the vicar of Christ, and, in the right of Christ, to be the governor of all Christian people. And these were known by the name of Papists; as the ministers I mentioned before, were commonly called Presbyterians.²⁰

Hobbes goes on to mention several more seducers, including the Anabaptists, Fifth-monarchy Men, Independents, urban merchants, those misled by the teachings of the universities, adventurers, and the common people, but his chief and most intellectually developed attack in *Behemoth* is on the 'papists' and the 'Presbyterians'. And, the key to that attack is the definition of heresy and the relation of faith and knowledge; for the claim of the popes to a right to establish and teach orthodox doctrine in the church was the means by which they had extended their rule over temporal rulers in Christian lands.²¹ As he says in *Behemoth*, speaking of heresy, 'in the Christian Church, there was in the signification of that word, comprehended a sinful opposition to him, that was chief judge of doctrines in order to the salvation of men's souls'.²² This claim was bolstered by clerics' use of Aristotle to frame a system of orthodox belief whose tenets only the pope could approve or disapprove and then enforce on believers through such constraints as excommunication.²³ It was the fall of Rome and the arrival of northern tribes in Italy that had allowed the pope to make an attempt on temporal power through his assertion of spiritual authority:

In this time it was that the Pope began, by pretence of his power spiritual, to encroach upon the temporal rights of all other princes of the west; and so continued gaining upon them, till his power was at the highest in that three hundred years, or thereabout, which passed between the eighth and eleventh century, that is, between Pope Leo the Third [?-816] and Pope Innocent the Third [1160-1216]. For in this time Pope Zachary the First deposed Chilperic, then King of France, and gave the kingdom to one of his subjects, Pepin; and Pepin took from the Lombards a great part of their territory and gave it to the Church. Shortly after, the Lombards having recovered their estate, Charles the Great retook it, and gave it to the Church again; and Pope Leo the Third made Charles Emperor.²⁴

There followed the development of universities, which spread both the papal system of doctrine and the scholastic method:

Within the same time, that is, between the time of the Emperor Charles the Great [c. 742–814] and of King Edward the Third of England [1327–1377], began their second polity; which was, to bring religion into an art, and thereby to maintain all the decrees of the Roman Church by disputation; not only from the Scriptures, but also from the philosophy of Aristotle, both moral and natural. And to that end the Pope exhorted the said Emperor by letter, to erect schools of all kinds of literature; and from thence began the institution of universities; for not long after, the universities began in Paris and in Oxford.²⁵

The grave error into which Western rulers had fallen was to acquiesce in the papal pursuit of temporal power by way of spiritual coercion, for they had thereby yielded to the pope jurisdiction over matters of faith and thus of human behavior and necessarily of politics. In fact, Hobbes says, the determination of orthodox belief and power to punish violation of religious law lay in the competence of the political ruler, as was evident in the role Constantine played in calling the Council of Nicaea:

B. The first general Council, held at Nicaea, declared all to be heresy which was contrary to the Nicene Creed, upon occasion of the heresy of Arius, which was the denying the divinity of Christ. . . .

A. I see by this, that both the calling of the Council, and the confirmation of their doctrine and church-government, had no obligatory force but from the authority of the Emperor.²⁶

All of the texts so far mentioned, from the English *Leviathan* through the exchange with Bramhall, including *Behemoth* and the Latin *Leviathan*, show these characteristic arguments regarding political power, heresy and the relation of faith and knowledge, the subordination of the church to civil authority and role of the civil sovereign as public theologian. It is true that there are other characteristic features of Hobbes's political thought which are set out earlier in *The Elements of Law*, extend through the two editions of *De Cive* and also appear in the texts we have just discussed. But, the earlier texts do not exhibit the ideal-historical elements that emerged first in the English *Leviathan* and then were never absent in his politico-theological treatises thereafter. The 1668 Appendix

provides an excellent distillation and recapitulation of these additions, and it is to its three chapters that we now turn.

CHAPTER ONE: ON THE NICENE CREED²⁷

Hobbes adopted a dialogue format in the Appendix, and its first statement sets out some key interpretive principles:

[1]A. I should like you to explain the Nicene Creed to me. I ask not so that I may grasp the matters in question with my intellect, but that I may understand these words of the faith in a way that is in agreement with the Holy Scriptures.

This passage establishes two presumptions whose implications are developed throughout the Appendix: (1) Scripture alone is the source and norm of doctrine, the so-called *sola scriptura* principle of Protestant hermeneutics,²⁸ and (2) though reason cannot prove the truth of revealed religion, it is useful in explaining where it comes from and how to speak about it. This is to say that Hobbes distinguished Christian belief from knowledge or science, so, in explaining the creed, he rejected any interpretation that rested on or derived from philosophic understandings, terms or argumentation, especially those from the Greek metaphysical tradition.²⁹ For, Hobbes was one of many in the Christian tradition who sought to distinguish what was Greek in Christianity from what was Christian; he was a de-Hellenizer.³⁰ The interest he shows in the creed inaugurated at Nicaea flows in part from his desire to call into question any interpretation of it that relied on ideas and beliefs that were not biblical in origin.³¹ This is why he was consistently critical of such early Church Fathers as John Damascene,³² Epiphanius,³³ Cyril,³⁴ by implication Origen,³⁵ and perhaps Augustine.³⁶

But, the council is also of interest for the role that Constantine played in calling it and in approving and enforcing its canons by making them laws.³⁷ The emperor, Hobbes says, even approved the word *homoousios* as descriptive of Christ's relation to the Father.³⁸ It was only through the emperor's civil authority as defender of the peace that the councils' decisions came to have coercive force.³⁹ Proceeding through the major articles of the Nicene Creed, Hobbes gives an example of how his approach to doctrine differs from those he has criticized. It is with respect to the Fathers' attempts to explain the meaning of the Greek word *hypostasis* in the creed's

description of the three person of the Trinity. '[I]n their desire to make the mystery of the Trinity intelligible to all Christians',⁴⁰ he says, they had compared the divine persons with fire, light and heat, taking fire as a reference to the Father, light to the Son and heat to the Holy Spirit.⁴¹ It is his scientific acumen that prompts Hobbes to demur at the comparison's adequacy in that the three things compared are not of the same substance,⁴² whereas the divine persons are all 'of one substance'; while it is his fidelity to the *sola scriptura* principle that prompts him to reject the comparison as nonbiblical.⁴³

Rather than give speculative, metaphysically grounded explanations of the creed, he enters into a philological analysis of the language used in the Bible, showing the original meaning of the term *persona* or person⁴⁴ and then offering an explication of the term superior to that of the Fathers, who have erred by mistaking the import of Greek terminology.⁴⁵ Finding the doctrine in the Scriptures, he regards it as a revealed truth, worthy of reverence and careful explication, not empty speculation. Moreover, in defining faith in opposition to knowledge, Hobbes seeks to preserve the character of faith: 'Indeed, to me it was wrong for them to have sought to explain that mystery at all. For what is it to explain a mystery if not to destroy it or make a non-mystery of it? For faith, changed into knowledge, dies, leaving only hope and charity'.⁴⁶

In a step that would be quite surprising if it came from one who was dissembling, Hobbes, in concluding this chapter of the Appendix, drew his reader's attention unambiguously to his persistent advocacy of materialism as an apt vehicle for the expression of the truths of Christianity. His interlocutors, A and B, have just been discussing incorporeality in relation to the divine life, and A asks whether such terms as 'incorporeal substance', 'immaterial substance', or 'separated essences' are found in the Holy Scripture. B replies:

[95]B. They are not. But, the first of the Thirty-nine Articles of the faith, published by the Church of England in the year 1562, expressly states, 'God is without body and without parts'. And, this must not be denied. Also, the penalty for those who do deny it is established as excommunication.

[96]A. And, it will not be denied.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, in the twentieth article, it is stated that nothing ought to be enjoined as a belief by the church that could not be derived from the Holy Scriptures. How I wish this first article

had been derived in that way! For, I still do not know in what sense something can be called greatest or great that is not body.

That God was material was an assertion that is new in the 1668 text, though Hobbes had likely held the view for some time before.⁴⁸ This cannot represent a calculated attempt to placate his critics; it is quite the opposite.

CHAPTER TWO: ON HERESY⁴⁹

The second chapter of the Appendix sets out Hobbes's theory of the Hellenization of Christianity. It is crucial to his theological project because through it he hopes to explain how criteria of truth and falsity came to be applied to religious beliefs, which, he says, in themselves cannot admit of such qualities. His answer anticipates that of the great nineteenth-century biblical scholar Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930), who, in his major work, *The History of Dogma*, approached Christian doctrine not dogmatically, as though the tenets of Christianity had come into being entire and at one instant, but historically, with full knowledge of the processes of dispute, debate and compromise that had led to their articulation.⁵⁰ Like Hobbes, Harnack too wanted to distinguish that which was Greek in Christianity from that which derived from Christ's teachings.

For Harnack as for Hobbes, the historical study of the Gospel indicated that dogmatic rigor was not a feature of early Christianity but developed only later in the theological debates over Trinitarian and especially Christological issues. Although dogmas may have been intimated in the Gospel, they came into existence only over time, in a process by which the simple message of Christian faith was changed into claims regarding truth and knowledge. In other words, Harnack saw the development of Christianity as a process of its intellectualization and Hellenization that Hobbes strikingly anticipated so long before.

Interlocutors A and B of the Latin *Leviathan* discuss the rise of heresy in the primitive church, which prompts A to ask why, since it had the New Testament as its guide, the primitive church should fall into so many disagreements about Christian teaching. B responds:

[122]B. It was the pride of the philosophers of whom I have just spoken, ignorant men living at the time of the apostles, who had learned to dispute

more subtly and orate more powerfully than other men. These men, in entering upon the way of Christ, were almost of necessity chosen as bishops and elders to defend and propagate the faith, and, as much as in them lay, even as Christian converts, they held fast to the teachings of their pagan masters. Accordingly, they sought to interpret the Holy Scriptures so as to preserve at once their own philosophy and the Christian faith, as though they were the same thing.

As in *Behemoth*, Hobbes again stresses the importance of the Nicene Council in settling these early disputes and alleviating the threat to the peace that they constituted:

[124]B. In the primitive church, up to the time of the Council of Nicaea, most of the teachings about which the Christians then disagreed concerned the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. For, although everyone held that this mystery was incomprehensible, nonetheless, trusting the philosophy of his masters, each man dared to explain it after his own manner.

From this, there arose at first arguments, then disorders; thereafter, to avoid scandal and establish peace in the church, synods were organized, convoked without the order of those in power but through the voluntary drawing together of bishops and pastors, as they were able with the lessening of persecution.

Hobbes insists that the governing principle under which the councils operated was merely majority rule:

In these councils, the participants defined what one was to believe concerning the faith in any area of dispute. That which was defined was called the catholic faith; what was condemned, heresy. For, with respect to the individual bishop or pastor, the council was the catholic church, that is, the whole or universal church. So also was their opinion the catholic opinion, while a specific teaching held by an individual pastor was heresy. And, it is from this, as much as I have been able to explore in the historical sources, that the name 'Catholic Church' derives. And, in every church, the words 'catholic' and 'heretic' are relative terms.

Hobbes stresses the role of Constantine in using the council to settle arguments that had caused disruptions of the peace:

The reason for calling the Council of Nicaea was Arius, elder of Alexandria. When the bishop of that city, Alexander, had said to him that the Son of God was *homousios*, that is, of the same substance, with the Father, Arius contradicted him. And then, with a large number of elders present, in the rising heat of their argument, he also denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. As a

result, shortly thereafter civil strife and bloodshed were born in Alexander's city. Then, in order to preserve the peace, Emperor Constantine the Great convoked the famous Council of Nicaea.

He concludes the point by faulting the political authorities following the council who had allowed the Roman Church to usurp their own proper jurisdiction through the power of excommunication for heresy:

[130]B. [A]fter that, the Roman Church by its decrees arrogated to itself the inability to err as to the articles of the faith. And then, Emperor Phocas granted supremacy over all bishops to the pope. And, as the power of the empire in Italy began to wane and with the Christian princes seized by fear of the Saracens, the pope, already mightily increased in riches and power, called general councils upon his own authority, without regard for the authority of the emperors and kinglings of Italy. He even dared to excommunicate some kings and emperors as heretics.

Hobbes then states the conclusion to be drawn from the history he has just narrated regarding the competence of the civil sovereign:

[134]B. [I]t is altogether necessary that precaution be taken in kingdoms and commonwealths lest sedition and civil wars arise. And, since these very frequently arise out of doctrinal differences and battles of intellect, those must certainly be coerced by some punishment who, in public meetings or in books, teach things contrary to what the laws of princes and commonwealths have ordained.

Thus, beginning with the need of civil authority to bring peace to lands torn by religious strife, the Hellenization of Christianity had proceeded as the doctors of the early church utilized ancient philosophy to buttress doctrinal positions that served the interests of the clerics, who thereby gained a spiritual dominion over people's lives and consciences. These doctrinal positions had been the result of deliberation and compromise and were expressions in any case of merely majority opinion but, joined with the coercive force of political authority in defense of the peace, came to exercise control over men's minds and behavior. Then, as the power of civil authority waned with the fall of Rome and that of the pope increased, they served to extend and enforce a coercive spiritual authority over all of Western Christendom. This coercion served only clerical interests and was contrary to the true message of the Gospel, as Luther and the Reformation not long before Hobbes's era had revealed.⁵¹ While

uniformity of outward profession and behavior was a desirable, even necessary, element of political control,⁵² the authority of the civil magistrate extended only to that which was external to the inner faith of the individual, thoughts being free.⁵³

The threat posed by the 'Presbyterians' in Hobbes's account stemmed from the fear that they now sought to enforce a coercive, intrusive, publicly enforced doctrinal regime similar to that of the pope's over Englishmen's hearts and minds. They were the new pretenders to the 'ghostly authority'⁵⁴ once exercised by the pope in England. Though they had presumed most of the Reformation,⁵⁵ in contrast to the Anglicans, whom they accused of having condemned too little of the 'Romish religion',⁵⁶ they now claimed an administration in government distinct from the civil sovereign. This claim was set out in the Presbyterians' Westminster Confession of Faith of 1647, where, in the chapter 'Of Church Censures', it stated that 'The Lord Jesus, as king and head of His Church, has therein appointed a government, in the hand of Church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate'.

While the ideal-historical story that Hobbes tells of the Hellenization of Christianity and the rise of spiritual coercion through papal authority do not fit well with Presbyterian theology or politics, especially after Pride's Purge of 1648 had ended their power in Parliament, the linking of priest, pope and presbyter is a theme that Hobbes stressed in the English *Leviathan*:

But who knows that this spirit of Rome, now gone out, and walking by missions through the dry places of China, Japan, and the Indies,⁵⁷ that yield him little fruit, may not return, or rather an assembly of spirits⁵⁸ worse than he, enter, and inhabit this clean swept house, and make the end thereof worse than the beginning? For it is not the Roman clergy only, that pretends the kingdom of God to be of this world, and thereby to have a power therein, distinct from that of the civil state.⁵⁹

It remained an emphasis in the 1668 Appendix as well.⁶⁰

CHAPTER THREE: CONCERNING CERTAIN OBJECTIONS TO LEVIATHAN⁶¹

The last chapter of the Appendix is self-consciously retrospective in that it answers critics of the English *Leviathan*. It begins by sketching the political, social and religious context in which that text had

appeared. It is in parts rather self-congratulatory and certainly self-serving, as when A says that the author of the English *Leviathan* had 'defended remarkably well the rights of the king in things temporal as well as spiritual'.⁶² Further, Hobbes defends his theory of the corporeality of the soul and of God,⁶³ here provocatively avowed with a reference to Tertullian.⁶⁴ He reiterates his assertion regarding the relation of fear to religion⁶⁵ and offers an extended explanation and defense of his doctrine of the Trinity,⁶⁶ much as he had set it out in the English text. He recasts his description of the role of Moses in the Trinity so that the prophet no longer seems to be one of its members, and he characterizes the earlier account as simply 'mistaken', although he says his original intent had been impeccable.⁶⁷ He reasserts the role Moses played as minister with respect to the founding of Israel and thereby the church.⁶⁸ He relies on philological evidence to show that 'angel' in Greek and Hebrew means 'messenger' and says that they are no more than the sensory means by which God communicates His commands, denying that they are substances.⁶⁹ He goes to some length to deny the immortality of the created soul.⁷⁰ He repeats his belief that, following the Second Coming, the kingdom of God will be on earth, not in heaven,⁷¹ and he denies again that the damned will suffer eternal pain.⁷² He propounds once again his belief that Christ as the 'word of God' means God's promise,⁷³ and he again defends religious dissimulation.⁷⁴ As before, he expends considerable effort in defending the right of the political sovereign to administer the sacraments.⁷⁵ He again defends a minimalist view of the content of faith, his *unum necessarium*.⁷⁶ Hobbes concludes with this exchange:

[213]A. There are many other paradoxical arguments in the same book, but, because they are of too little importance for us to linger over now, I shall not bring them up.

[214]B. As you wish. But, in these instances you have brought up, I find nothing against the faith of our church, although there are several which defeat the teaching of private theologians.⁷⁷

The foregoing list of his supposed retractions and this conclusion must make it clear that the Appendix is a late attempt to restate the bulk of the teachings that had made the English *Leviathan* remarkable, not to say monstrous and scandalous, in the eyes of its author's contemporaries. Nothing is toned down; very little

is even restated; the later text is in parts more radical than its predecessor.

He undertakes this task by distinguishing religious belief from knowledge and by making the enforcement of religious expression in public dependent solely upon the laws of the civil authority, embodied in such figures as Constantine, Henry VIII and Elizabeth. Preserved in the distinction he draws between public profession and private belief is the right of the individual to entertain such doctrines as he or she wishes, so long as, if they are contrary to laws of the sovereign, they go unexpressed in public.

CONCLUSION

Although often thought to represent a retreat on Hobbes's part from positions that had brought him under opprobrium and continued attacks following his return to England in 1651 and the Restoration in 1660, the 1668 Appendix is in fact a restatement and defence of his most radical views. We have seen that the one retraction he makes stems from what he characterizes as a careless mistake, easy to remedy.⁷⁸ Taken together, the Appendix's three chapters thus congregate with and amplify several other pieces written in the 1650s and 1660s, which defend the positions of the English *Leviathan* by restating and developing its attack on claims by clerics to authority in the state independent of the civil sovereign. In a text like *Behemoth*, the restatement of these themes was prosecuted largely by way of political history. In the Appendix, while history is also present, the burden of the effort rests with the presentation of a particular reading of the intellectual bases of Christian theology. Hobbes's encounter with Bramhall may have brought home to him the debt that Anglican theology continued to owe to Greek thought by way of the Fathers, prompting him to consider the relation of Greek metaphysics in general, and Aristotelian thought in particular, to the early development of Christian, that is, Roman Catholic, theology and the role it had played in the subjection of civil authority to religious authority in the West. This realization likely lay at the root of his attempt to articulate a Christian theology along materialist lines.

However that may be, we already find strong indications of his research into these questions in the English *Leviathan*, and they are never absent thereafter, as the Appendix makes clear. It perpetuates

the criticism of Aristotle, ties the history of Christian doctrine to the use of Greek thought by the Fathers and condemns the intrusion upon the individual conscience which that use had made possible, first by papal authorities and now perhaps by the assembly of Presbyterian divines. That this radical, energetic and brilliant assault, apart from what it owed to the new science, was launched from within the horizon of Protestant belief, culture and historiography seems obvious. This is to say that an author's intellectual development remains the necessary prior possibility for any intervention such as the one that Hobbes sought to make in 1651. Further, any interpretive approach which dissolves a speech act into the circumstances of its reception obviates this prior horizon of authorial intention and to that extent remains incomplete. It remains then to relate that intention to the interpretive possibilities opened through each thinker's placement in the broader, antecedent horizon of his or her era.

NOTES

1. All references to *Leviathan* are to the Curley edition of the text in the following format, with chapter and paragraph and then page references, where the first page number refers to the 1651 Head edition and the second to the Curley edition: *Lev.*, xxxiii, 1, 199–200/250–1. I cite my own translation of the 1668 Appendix but using the same paragraph numbers as Curley; see Wright, 'Appendix to *Leviathan*', *Religion, Politics and Thomas Hobbes* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 35–174. Other references to Hobbes's works are to the Molesworth edition, both in English (*EW*) and in Latin (*OL*).
2. See letters 67, 75, 100 and 108 in Hobbes, *Correspondence*.
3. See Hobbes, *Correspondence*, letter 129.
4. See Hobbes, *Correspondence*, letter 137.
5. See Wright, 'Introduction to the 1668 Appendix', *ibid.*, esp. n. 5.
6. See Answer to Bishop Bramhall, *EW*, IV, 317.
7. See *Lev.*, 'A Review and Conclusion', 496/395–6.
8. See *Six Lessons*, *EW*, VII, 335. See also Karl Schuhmann, *Hobbes Une Chronique: cheminement de sa pensée et de sa vie* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1998), 195 (hereafter, Schuhmann, *Chronique*). See also Glenn Burgess, 'Contexts for Writing and Publication of Hobbes's *Leviathan*', *History of Political Thought* 11 (1990): 675–702, and Jeffrey R. Collins, 'Thomas Hobbes and the Blackloist Conspiracy of 1649', *Historical Journal* 45 (2002): 305–31.

9. For a reading of the rhetorical elements in *Leviathan*, see Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
10. See *Lev.*, xlvi, 18, 372–4/460.
11. See Quentin Skinner, 'Conquest and Consent: Thomas Hobbes and the Engagement Controversy'. In *The Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement 1646–1660*, ed. G. E. Aylmer, rev. ed. (London: Macmillan, 1974), 79–94.
12. See *Six Lessons*, *EW*, VII, 335.
13. For a comparison of the two texts, see François Tricaud, 'Quelques questions soulevées par la comparaison du *Léviathan* latin avec le *Léviathan* anglais', *Hobbes-Forschungen*, ed. Reinhart Koselleck and Roman Schnur (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1969), 237–44, and *Léviathan Traité de la matière, de la forme et du pouvoir de la république ecclésiastique et civile* (Paris: Éditions Sirey, 1971), xvi–xxix. See also F. C. Hood's discussion in *The Divine Politics of Thomas Hobbes: An Interpretation of Leviathan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).
14. On Hobbes's development as a thinker, see Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).
15. See Strauss, *Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 81.
16. For the Anglican clergy, see Hobbes's comments on episcopacy *jure divino* and *divina providentia* in *Lev.*, lvi, 296–7/368. On the Presbyterian clergy as the new pretender to political power, see *Lev.*, xii, 32, 58–60/72, and xlvii, 34, 387/484.
17. See *Leviathan*, chapters 42 and 44 *passim*.
18. On this point, see Thomas Hobbes, *De la liberté et de la nécessité*, ed. Franck Lessay (Paris: J. Vrin, 1993), 18.
19. See Thomas Hobbes, *De la liberté et de la nécessité*, ed. Franck Lessay (Paris: J. Vrin, 1993), 31ff, and Schuhmann, *Chronique*, 132ff.
20. See *EW*, VI, 167.
21. For Hobbes's account of how the Presbyterians sought a similar jurisdiction over men's consciences, see *Behemoth*, *EW*, VI, 193ff and 18ff.
22. See *EW*, VI, 174.
23. On excommunication in the early church, see Appendix, §§146ff.
24. See *EW*, VI, 178.
25. See *EW*, VI, 184.
26. See *EW*, VI, 176.
27. See Appendix, §§1–104.
28. For application of the *sola scriptura* principle in the Appendix, see §§8, 26, 32, 46, 56, 84, 96, 122, 170, 178, 196 and 212. Compare Tracy

- B. Strong, 'How to Write Scripture: Words, Authority, and Politics in Thomas Hobbes', *Critical Inquiry* 20 (1993): 128–59.
29. On this point, see, for example, Appendix, §§14–16, 24, 46, 56, 77–81, 88–89 and 120–21.
 30. On this general question, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture: The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1993), and *What Has Athens To Do with Jerusalem?: Timaeus and Genesis in Counterpoint* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997).
 31. On the status of the so-called Athanasian Creed, see Appendix, §85 and note.
 32. See Appendix, §§79 and particularly 180.
 33. See Appendix, §89.
 34. See Appendix, §103.
 35. On the eternal procession of the Son, see Appendix, §204 and note.
 36. Hobbes quotes Peter Lombard, quoting Augustine; see Appendix, §89.
 37. On Constantine in the Appendix, see §§32, 128, 134–5, 146, 148, 160 and 180 and notes.
 38. See Appendix, §180.
 39. On coercion in enforcing doctrinal uniformity, see Appendix, §§134ff.
 40. See Appendix, §14.
 41. See, for example, *Quaestiones aliae*, in Migne, *Graeca Patrologia*, vol. 28, question IV, col. 780, now held a doubtful work of Athanasius.
 42. See Appendix, §14.
 43. See Appendix, §90.
 44. On this point, see Wright, 'Hobbes and the Economic Trinity', *Religion, Politics and Thomas Hobbes*, 175–210.
 45. See Appendix, §§64–103.
 46. The reference is to St. Paul's discussion of faith, hope and love in 1 Corinthians 13:13.
 47. But, compare Appendix, §180.
 48. On this point, see Wright, 'Hobbes in Exile', *Religion, Politics and Thomas Hobbes*, 251–310.
 49. See Appendix, §§105–174.
 50. See, for example, *What Is Christianity?* trans. Thomas Bailey Sanders (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), with an introduction by Rudolf Bultmann.
 51. See Appendix, §130.
 52. See Appendix, §134.
 53. See Appendix, §135.
 54. See *Lev.*, xxix, 15, 171–2/216.

55. See *Lev.*, xii, 32, 58–60/72.
56. See *EW*, VI, 194.
57. A reference to the efforts of such Catholic missionaries as Francis Xavier, Matteo Ricci, Luis Frois and Alessandro Valignano.
58. A reference to the Presbyterian Assembly of Divines, which met throughout much of the period of the Civil War at the instance of Parliament.
59. See *Lev.*, xlvii, 34, 323–4/484.
60. See Appendix, §175.
61. See Appendix, §§175–214.
62. See Appendix, §175.
63. See Appendix, §179.
64. On this point, see Wright, 'Hobbes in Exile', 187ff.
65. See Appendix, §183.
66. See Appendix, §§185ff.
67. See Appendix, §186.
68. See Appendix, §186.
69. See Appendix, §§189ff.
70. See Appendix, §§193ff.
71. See Appendix, §§195ff.
72. See Appendix, §§199ff.
73. See Appendix, §§203ff.
74. See Appendix, §§205ff.
75. See Appendix, §§207ff.
76. See Appendix, §§209ff.
77. See Appendix, §§213ff.
78. See Appendix, §186.

18 Hobbes and His Contemporaries

Hobbes generated more hostile literature than any other thinker in the seventeenth century.¹ Indeed, if judged by the number of hostile books and pamphlets he generated, he may well be the most maligned philosopher of all time. Books in English or Latin hostile to him in the seventeenth century alone run into hundreds and his name became a byword for sensual license and atheism at a time when England was ruled by a puritanical ethic that, officially at least, and until the Restoration of 1660, allowed no deviation from the strictest moral code. Despite this, Hobbes was to influence almost all later thinkers, either directly or indirectly, through his account of the individual and the state and to leave a mark on political theory that lifts him into the highest ranks alongside the names of Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Locke, Hegel, Marx and Mill. The general hostility to him in England we shall shortly chart. Nevertheless, some of the positions for which he argued attracted a following that owed much to the power of his argument and the way in which his assumptions about the world and human nature fitted with a variety of positions that many in the seventeenth century throughout Europe were coming to see as attractive. Hobbes's relationship to his contemporaries was therefore a complex one. His philosophy was intellectually powerful and seductive to those who were prepared to examine it closely. But it contained many ideas that were undoubtedly politically dangerous, and it was a risk to espouse them too openly, certainly for several decades after they first appeared. Hobbes was, like the Devil, clever and dangerously attractive. It would therefore be advisable for anybody feasting on his philosophy to make full use of a long spoon.

From the point of view of Hobbes's contemporaries he was dangerous because he was seen as doubtfully orthodox in his theology,

which was undoubtedly true. But in Hobbes's long life what counted as orthodoxy was liable to change from one ruler to the next. He was born in the very Protestant reign of Elizabeth I, and died in the reign of the secretly Catholic Charles II, of whom, in Paris in the 1640s, Hobbes had himself been the mathematics tutor. In a life that spanned less than a decade short of a century there had been religious upheaval in England and a major civil war, which he saw as mirroring similar and larger conflicts throughout Europe. They were not easy times in which to advocate novel ideas that might be misunderstood, as the examples of Bruno, Galileo and many others testify. Nor were Protestant lands always safer than those that were Catholic.

Hobbes's early years in Malmesbury and then Oxford, from whence he graduated in 1608, did not yield lifelong friendships. He seems not to have made close or lasting friendships in either place, nor to have made much mark on his contemporaries. But he must have impressed his tutors enough for him to be recommended to William Cavendish as tutor and companion to his son, another William, who was only two years younger than Hobbes. Hobbes was, no doubt, something of an influence on his charge, but William was not to live into old age, dying in 1628 at the age of thirty-eight, before Hobbes had published any of his great works. The first, his translation of Thucydides, which appeared in the following year, was dedicated to the memory of William. The Cavendishes were obviously closely attached to Hobbes, and they became in a sense his own family.

Hobbes, as tutor and companion, accompanied his charges in tours to the continent of Europe. It was on the second of these, probably in 1630, that Hobbes 'discovered' the power of geometry. I agree with A. P. Martinich that it is difficult to exaggerate the importance of geometry to Hobbes's philosophy.² Through it he came to an understanding of the notions of proof, demonstration and certainty that dominate every facet of his philosophy. And it was through his relative mastery of geometry that he was able to enter the world of the then being created mathematical sciences, of which optics was soon for him to be a central concern. Geometry became the intellectual paradigm for all true philosophy for Hobbes from this point on and set a standard for any discipline that claimed to be a science. Before this continental tour Hobbes had worked as secretary to Francis Bacon, one of the greatest of intellectual figures of the early seventeenth

century, and there are at least traces of Bacon's influence to be detected in Hobbes's thought, perhaps in particular, in his commitment to the utilitarian benefits that the natural sciences can generate. Through his patrons, Hobbes had also come into contact with many leading figures of the period associated with the Great Tew circle, which included such luminaries as the theologian Lucian Cary, Lord Falkland, Sydney Godolphin,³ William Chillingworth, the author of the widely influential *The Religion of Protestants* (1638), and the great statesman Edward Hyde, first Earl of Clarendon, of whom more later.⁴

It was probably in 1630 that Hobbes reached his great insight into the nature and cause of sense that was to dominate his account of human beings and lies at the base of his whole philosophy. It was that 'the cause of all things was to be sought in the difference between their motions'.⁵ That is to say that all change is the product of motions of physical objects, themselves composed of tiny particles impacting on one another. Hobbes had hardly been the first to reach such a conclusion, for it was central to the classical atomists of ancient Greece and revived in a somewhat different form in Italy by Galileo in the 1620s.⁶ But it is likely that Hobbes arrived at it by reflection on the nature of change rather than straightforwardly borrowing from others. On Hobbes's view sensation was a kind of motion, generated by an external object, which led to a motion in the brain that we experience as an awareness of, say, the colour of an object. From this it followed that the cause of sensations such as those of colour, taste and smell, the so-called secondary qualities of objects, are not anything in the object that causes them other than powers to cause those experiences in us. Some years later, Descartes was to claim that Hobbes had plagiarised this account of sensation from his own work. This was to form part of a cantankerous dispute between the two men that lasted until Descartes's death in 1650 and that marred relations between the two leading philosophers of their generation, if not their century. We shall return to that relationship below. But it is worth attempting to underline Hobbes's position for he gives the claim about the nature of sensation a dimension that had either been rejected or not fully considered by others and for which he deserves the special credit that he, indeed, claimed for himself. For Hobbes it is not just the case that motion is the *cause* of sensation, a position accepted by Galileo and Descartes, but that sensation

is itself a motion, a physical change in the brain. In modern terms, Hobbes was an identity theorist, perhaps the first ever. Identity theorists hold, roughly, that experiences and thoughts (mental states) are numerically identical with physical states of the brain. For Descartes and other dualists, whilst they accepted that sensations are *caused* by motions in the brain, the seat of consciousness is another substance, mind, which is not material, whose essence is thought, in contrast with matter, whose essence is extension. Hobbes's readers failed to appreciate the importance for Hobbes's position of this distinction, which was a cause of considerable frustration for him. It is a point also missed by many of his commentators.

If the discovery of geometry and his insight, as he at least saw it, into the nature and origin of sensation were central to the whole of Hobbes's philosophy then almost equally important for his philosophical development were the contacts he was to make in his third tour to the continent in 1634–6. It was on this visit that he was to meet Galileo in Florence and Mersenne, Gassendi and Descartes in Paris. By the time that Hobbes met Galileo he had already arrived at or accepted basic philosophical positions that matched central beliefs of the Florentine. But he certainly found in Galileo's work powerful support for his own positions. One of these was expressed by Galileo in his account of the place of mathematics in understanding the natural world. As the astronomer had so elegantly expressed it:

Philosophy is written in this grand book, the universe, which stands continually open to our gaze. But the book cannot be understood unless one first learns to comprehend the language and read the letters of which it is composed. It is written in the language of mathematics, and the characters are triangles, circles, and other geometric figures without which it is humanly impossible to understand a single word of it.⁷

Galileo's work exhibited the power of mathematics as applied to the natural world, and most centrally to motion, which for Hobbes raised it into the class of a science, that is to say, a body of knowledge that is demonstrably certain. As he famously expressed it in the Epistle Dedicatory to the *Elements of Philosophy*:

After [Copernicus], the doctrine of the motion of the earth being now received, and a difficult question thereupon arising concerning the descent of heavy bodies, Galileus in our time . . . was the first that opened to us the

gate of natural philosophy universal, which is the knowledge of the nature of *motion*.⁸

Hobbes thus found in the works of Galileo an understanding of the natural world that substantially gelled with his own, though whether it was merely a confirmation of his own views or the cause of them is now impossible to say.

The first work of Hobbes to have a serious impact on his contemporaries was not a published book but a manuscript of which several copies came into circulation in 1640. This was Hobbes's *Elements of Law*, not fully published until 1889, though manuscript copies were circulating from 1640. It appears reasonable to claim that some of Hobbes's religious views as presented in the *Elements* arose out of discussions at Great Tew, perhaps especially the views emanating from Chillingworth, of which the central one was that the source of Christian knowledge lay in the Bible and that the central doctrine of Christianity was simple, that Jesus is the son of God. Where Hobbes was to differ from Chillingworth was in his view as to who might interpret the Bible. For Hobbes it was ultimately always the sovereign.

To appreciate Hobbes's relations with his contemporaries it is necessary to say something more about his major philosophical positions as they emerge in the *Elements of Law* and which for the most part remain central to his later writings. Many of these are the consequence of positions that Hobbes had already taken. He begins with an account of sensation and imagination that presupposes his materialist account of the world – that there is nothing other than body and all change is the product of bodies in motion. It was these deeper presuppositions that sowed the seeds for his being regarded by his readers as an atheist. For it was the existence of spiritual matter, central to virtually all religious accounts of the world, that Hobbes's system denied. Hobbes himself always argued strongly that his own philosophy was entirely at one with Christian doctrine, and his defence cannot be ignored or dismissed nearly so easily as some of his readers supposed. But it was the religious implications of his views that were to be the major cause of his troubles in later life and the source of many of the numerous attacks on him that remain a major feature of the intellectual landscape of the second half of the seventeenth century.

Another of the most denigrated aspects of Hobbes's account was his apparent moral relativism. He says that we call those things good that please us and evil those things that displease us, leaving the way open to deep disagreements between individuals and groups about what is good and evil and offering no criterion for deciding whom, if anybody, is correct. A third was his claim that God is such a being as it is impossible to say anything about him: he is incomprehensible and it is impossible even to imagine him. All we are able to do is honour him. This seemed to imply (probably correctly) that Hobbes held that many of the things that theologians said about God were in fact nonsense if taken literally. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that theologians were amongst Hobbes's strongest critics and attributed to him a hostility to Christianity that was not wholly justified.

But even if we can say little or nothing about God, human beings have another power that flows from their ability to use language that is central to human life. Because of our use of language, men can make agreements or contracts and can also recognise that certain consequences flow from these contracts, namely that we have a duty to keep those into which we enter. Without an external force to make people comply with those contracts, however, there is no independent way in which the contracts can be enforced. It follows from this we all have an interest in establishing a sovereign power to provide the conditions of peace that we all crave and which can compel conformity to the laws laid down by that sovereign body.

To prevent religious disagreement within the state it is vital that it is recognised that the power of sovereignty also includes the power to settle religious doctrine. It followed from this that any transnational church, such as Roman Catholicism, was to be rejected as a source of potential conflict. In England in the seventeenth century, where most people were not Catholics, there was little opposition to Hobbes's views on this matter, which fitted well with the constitutional position of the Church of England that the king or queen was the head of the church. But his argument was unlikely to appeal to a Catholic audience in much of continental Europe. Despite this, it is worth remembering that in France especially many of Hobbes's friends were Catholic. Part of the explanation for this is that, as we shall see, Hobbes's reputation there was, first, as a natural philosopher rather than as a political theorist. The impact of the *Elements*

of *Law* outside of an English-speaking audience was virtually nil. In manuscript form its impact in England was also limited. But Hobbes saw its potentiality for causing him trouble. In its claim that sovereignty lay with the monarch, it obviously supported the king's position in his arguments with parliament. Hobbes saw the implications of his commitment to absolute monarchy and the possible civil war looming. He decided in November 1640 that it was time to leave the country!

In Paris he was reunited with his friends Mersenne and Gassendi. Before this, in 1637, he had been sent by Kenelm Digby a copy of Descartes's *Discourse on the Method*. The *Discourse* consists of four parts: method, optics, meteors and geometry, the last three, according to Descartes, being examples of application of the method described in the first part. Just before his flight Hobbes had sent to Mersenne a fifty-six-page manuscript in which he criticised Descartes's work, especially his account of various optical claims in *La Dioptrique*, but also on Descartes's account of matter and spirit.⁹ Hobbes's document was forwarded to Descartes, by then in Holland, who responded strongly to Hobbes's criticisms: 'although the style in which it is written makes its author look clever and learned, he seems to stray from the truth in every single claim which he advances'.¹⁰ In particular Descartes rejected Hobbes's 'corporeal soul and corporeal God'¹¹ claims that at the level of first ontology divided Hobbes and Descartes so completely that there would never be any chance of reconciliation. And Descartes's claim that Hobbes had stolen his account of sensation and the subsequent distinction between the primary and secondary qualities of bodies from him, when as we have seen, Hobbes believed that this was one of his great insights, meant that the relationship between them was doomed almost before it began. They once were guests together at a dinner arranged by Newcastle, but this was not sufficient to overcome their differences. When Mersenne invited Hobbes, along with several other thinkers, to reply to the argument of Descartes's *Meditations* in 1641, Descartes's replies to Hobbes's points were entirely dismissive. His view on Hobbes is apparent in a letter he wrote to an unnamed Jesuit priest, probably in 1643, who had asked Descartes for his view on the recently published *De Cive*: 'I believe its author to be the person who wrote the Third Objections against my *Meditations*, and that I find him much more astute in moral philosophy than in metaphysics or

physics'.¹² He continues in a way that was to be echoed by a hundred other commentators in the following decades:

Not that I could approve in any way his principles or his maxims. They are extremely bad and quite dangerous in that he supposes all persons to be wicked, or gives them cause to be so. His whole aim is to write in favour of the monarchy, but one could do this more effectively and soundly by adopting maxims which are more virtuous and solid. And he writes with such vehemence against the Church and the Roman Catholic religion that I do not see how he can prevent his book from being censured, unless he is given special support from some very powerful quarter.¹³

There was clearly no hope for a meeting of minds between the two great philosophers. The preceding remarks about Hobbes's moral theory are the only ones we have of Descartes about Hobbes that reveal anything other than contempt. And on Hobbes's part, although he clearly attempted to establish a basis for agreement and friendship with the Frenchman, suggesting amongst other things that Hobbes's spirits and Descartes's 'subtle matter' are the same thing, and implying that they were not as far apart as Descartes assumed, Descartes was right to think that there was simply no basis for any kind of philosophical agreement. Their differences were aptly revealed in Descartes's final comment on their relationship:

Finally, when he [Hobbes] says that I approve of that part of his writings to which I do not object, and on which I say nothing, he is wrong again. The true explanation, rather, is that I do not take that part of his writings seriously enough to think that I was obliged to spend my time refuting it.¹⁴

That Hobbes was well aware of his standing with Descartes is made clear from a letter to Sorbière when the latter was supervising the publication of the 1647 edition of *De Cive* in Holland where Descartes was living. Hobbes cautioned about allowing the printer to consult the opinion of the book amongst academics who were likely to condemn it, and in particular 'if Descartes hears or suspects that a book of mine (this or any other) is being assessed for publication, I know for certain he will stop it if he can. Please believe me on this one for I do know'.¹⁵ It is impossible to know whether Descartes might have had any such intention. But it clearly indicates the level to which relations between the two men had fallen that Hobbes should even think in such terms. He would perhaps have

been surprised to have learnt of Descartes's qualified admiration of his moral philosophy that we have already noted.

If Hobbes's impact on Descartes was little or nothing, as it appears, it is far from clear whether the reverse was also true. It is a matter of considerable contention precisely what that impact might have been. Hobbes was always to claim that it was he, rather than Descartes, who had first put forward the view that

light is a fancy in the minde, caused by motion in the braine, which motion againe is caused by the motion of the parts of such bodies as we call *lucid*: such as are the sunne and the fixed stars, and such as here on earth is fire. By putting you in mind hereof, I doe indeed call you to witnesse of it: because the same doctrine having since been published by another, I might be challenged for building on another man's [Descartes] ground.¹⁶

There seems to be little doubt that much of Hobbes's work on optics was written with Descartes as a target in mind. But how much he drew on Descartes for his own ideas in physics more generally and optics in particular is much less clear. It is sometimes argued that crucial to any final assessment on that matter turns on whether or not Hobbes is the author of the so-called 'Short Tract'. And about that there is no general agreement amongst Hobbes commentators.¹⁷ The manuscript appears to be in the hand of Robert Payne. The 'Short Tract', if by Hobbes, shows that Hobbes in 1630, the most probable date for the paper, had by then accepted an account of light and sensation that confirms his priority over Descartes in putting forward a subjective view of the secondary qualities and shows that he did not borrow his account from Descartes, who had not then published any such claims. But the theory of sensation that the 'Short Tract' contains is not the one that Hobbes was later to call his own and may not be one to which he ever subscribed. Against this Hobbes's strong denial of any subject indebtedness to Descartes, combined with the fact that his priority claim made to Newcastle could have been denied by either Newcastle himself or other members of the Welbeck group if they knew it to be false, suggests that Hobbes was correct in claiming that he had no such intellectual debt to Descartes. But the matter remains one that is likely to divide Hobbes scholars for some time to come, with little prospect of resolution.

What, however, is certainly clear is that Hobbes was a mechanist before he read Descartes. In the summer of 1636 he had written to

the Earl of Newcastle in reply to questions about the possibility of demonstrative knowledge in the natural sciences that:

In things that are not demonstrable, of which kind is the greatest part of Naturall Philosophy, as dependinge upon the motion of bodies so subtile as they are invisible, such as are ayre and spirits, the most that be attained unto is to have such opinions, as no certayne experience can confute, and from which can be deduced by lawfull argumentation, no absurdity, and such are your Lordships opinions in your letter of 3rd. July . . . namely That the variety of things is but the variety of locall motion in the spirits or invisible partes of bodies. And that such motion is heate.¹⁸

As Descartes recognised, Hobbes's account of matter and spirit was so different from his own, albeit they both gave mechanical accounts of change in the physical world, that there was no possibility of their being confused one with the other. But the letter from Hobbes to Newcastle illustrates the fact that Hobbes's own conception of the natural world, albeit very different from those offered by the scholastic philosophers in the universities and who were to find his works so much a threat, was formulated within a group of thinkers, the Welbeck circle, that were committed to a mechanical account of the properties of bodies that can be characterised as atomistic in nature. Even such a thinker as Hobbes's good (and Catholic) friend Sir Kenelm Digby, although much influenced by Aristotle's natural philosophy, was an atomist in his account of matter.¹⁹ Nor can we ignore another close friend of Hobbes, the French priest Pierre Gassendi, who was the great advocate of Epicurus's atomism in just those years that Hobbes was in Paris.²⁰

Gassendi occupies a special place in the creation of modern philosophy. If Descartes for good reason is seen as its father, then Gassendi is certainly an uncle. Indeed, with Mersenne and Arnaud he was one of that small but vital group of people based in Paris in the 1630s and 1640s who were the spiritual founders of that new way of looking at nature that Galileo in Italy and Descartes, from 1628 almost always in Holland, had already begun to foster. When Hobbes reached Paris at the end of 1640, he soon met Gassendi who returned to Paris in 1641, and, encouraged by Mersenne, there developed a mutual admiration and friendship that was important for both men. Unlike his relationship with Descartes, however, there were never to be accusations of plagiarism made against the other by either men, and

Sorbière tells us that on his deathbed in 1655 Gassendi was given a copy of Hobbes's *De Corpore* that he received with a kiss.²¹ There are only two known extant letters between them both by Hobbes, but both testify to their close friendship. In the first Hobbes writes from Paris to Gassendi at Digne, sending him an astronomy book. Hobbes closes by saying that he very much wishes that Gassendi was in Paris 'because when we are apart, my desire is not only that you should be in good health, but that I should know that you are. For, according to my judgement of men, your knowledge is greater than all mortals' and your virtue is even greater than your knowledge'.²² And nearly five years later, writing from London to Gassendi then in Paris, Hobbes thanked Gassendi for his praises 'in terms more laudatory than I deserve' and says that the most he deserves 'is to hear your teaching, to imitate, so far as I can, your virtuous way of life, and to distinguish them from the false, pompous, and histrionic life and teaching of those who, in spite of everyone else, desire to be the only authorities in those subjects'.²³

It would be wrong to see Gassendi's writings as a great personal influence on Hobbes. It is much more likely that any influence there was on the Englishman from his French friend was mostly a product of their discussions, and was the product of mutual agreement rather than discipleship. But many central elements of Gassendi's philosophy are echoed in that of Hobbes. There was, first of all, their mutual rejection of Descartes's philosophy. Their similar positions were expressed by Sir Charles Cavendish in a letter to John Pell just after the publication in 1644 of Descartes's *Principia Philosophia* and Gassendi's *Disquisito metaphysica*, itself an attack on Descartes's philosophy. 'I am of your opinion that Gassendes and De Cartes are of different dispositions', Cavendish wrote, 'and I perceive Mr Hobbes joines with Gassendes in his dislike of De Cartes his writings, for he utterlie mislikes De Cartes his last newe booke of philosophie, which, by his leave I highlie esteem of'.²⁴ Second, they were in epistemology committed empiricists, denying any source for knowledge other than experience. Third, they shared with Descartes a rejection of scholastic philosophy and the central place accorded Aristotle in philosophy. Fourth, they were both strongly committed to and saw themselves – in the case of Gassendi undoubtedly correctly – as advancing natural philosophy. Fifth, with Galileo and Descartes they both gave mathematics, especially geometry, a privileged central

place in their accounts of knowledge. Finally, they both shared with Descartes a conception of the mechanical account of the universe and a corpuscular account of matter and, with the important Hobbes' qualification we have already noted, a mechanical account of perception and the origins and nature of light and sensation. There were important differences between their philosophical systems of nature, but their similarities were much greater and placed all three in total opposition to the Aristotelians who still dominated the universities and whom they sought to replace. It is interesting that of the three only Gassendi ever occupied an official academic position, as he was also the only one in holy orders.²⁵ Whether he was, like Hobbes, an ontological materialist is much more problematic. His official religious position made it anyway extremely difficult for him to admit to any other belief than one that was *prima facie* acceptably orthodox.

If work on optics was a major concern of Hobbes's Paris period, so also was political philosophy. For it is whilst he was there that he wrote his two masterpieces, *De Cive*, first published in 1642 with a longer and more important edition in 1647, and *Leviathan*, published in London in 1651, just before his return to England in February 1652. He was encouraged to publish the former by his three close friends, Mersenne, Gassendi and Sorbière, and it was Sorbière who saw the 1647 edition through the press in Holland.²⁶ With the publication of *De Cive* in the 1647 edition Hobbes became established as a leading philosopher in Europe, even though his reputation in England was not so secure. For some of his fellow countrymen such as Newcastle, the young William Petty (born 1623) and Kenelm Digby, Hobbes was recognised as the great intellectual he was. But from others, especially those at the court of the English king in exile and his Catholic queen, there was much less recognition and often hostility. And this, despite Charles II's obvious personal liking for his mathematics tutor.

One of those with whom Hobbes was to have a stormy relationship was John Bramhall, later Archbishop of Armagh, and with whom he entered into a philosophically important debate about free will. A. P. Martinich characterises their differences like this: 'Bramhall, good Arminian that he was, took the affirmative; Hobbes, good English Calvinist that he was, took the negative'.²⁷ Although the dispute led to an unnecessary wrangling about the publication of the debate, there is no reason to see either of the protagonists as having

modified the other's view on the topic. But it was an early indication of how Anglican clergy were likely to greet Hobbes's philosophical views. What that was became very apparent with the publication of *Leviathan* in 1651 and Hobbes's return to England in February 1652. In those early years of his return to London Hobbes was close to the jurist, John Selden, author of *Mare Clausum*, in which he expressed a position with regard to freedom of the seas with which Hobbes was in substantial agreement. He also spent time with William Harvey who was, according to Hobbes, like himself, one of the great founders of modern science. It is not easy to say how much Harvey played a role in confirming Hobbes's view of natural change always being mechanical. Certainly Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood and the heart's function as a pump fitted well with Hobbes's account of the natural world and he always expressed the greatest admiration for Harvey's achievement. How Harvey regarded Hobbes is not so clear but both were confirmed Royalists and committed to the Anglican Church even when both were living in Cromwell's England.

With the publication of *Leviathan* Hobbes unleashed a storm that was to continue for the remainder of his life and well beyond. He was to be accused of every conceivable vice and the torrent of publications that were to appear in opposition to his supposed views occupy a special place in seventeenth-century intellectual history unmatched by any other work in any European language. In England the hostility was especially strong, and it perhaps reflects something about issues of conformity in England at that time, which is not particularly flattering to either the universities or the clergy where most of his opponents lay. There is a fairly strong contrast between his reception in England and that in other European countries, especially France, where he had many admirers and even disciples.²⁸ There were many dimensions to this hostility. Indeed, one might say that if Hobbes had set out deliberately to offend his fellow countrymen, it is difficult to see how he could have been more successful. His materialism was seen as a threat to traditional theology both for its denial of spirit and for the threat it represented to any traditional understanding of free will and thus to human responsibility. His philosophy was seen as implying a subjectivism about moral theory that opened the floodgates to wantonness and vice. His account of religion removed ultimate authority for religious truth from the hands of the church and handed it to the sovereign. He totally rejected the

scholastic philosophy that was still the bedrock on which the university courses were founded. His legal positivism set him against many in the legal profession and his emphasis on the merits of a single monarch, in contrast with parliamentary rule, set him against the politicians in Westminster. Indeed, it is difficult to find any important group in society that was not likely to find major strands of his philosophy unacceptable. Accordingly, Hobbes reaped the whirlwind. Although it is clear that many liked him personally, there was a general distancing of people from his philosophical positions. To many he was to become 'the Monster of Malmesbury', but, for the most part, this was a characterization applied by those who did not know him rather than those who did. Others saw him differently. To the poet Abraham Cowley, who had been with him in Paris in the 1640s, he was the 'great Columbus of the Golden Lands of new Philosophies'. Even many of his critics were happy to acknowledge his accomplishments and personal qualities. One such was the Earl of Clarendon, the most intellectually accomplished of all the royal advisers to the Stuart courts. Whilst in exile shortly before his death Clarendon wrote what is probably the most sophisticated critique of Hobbes to be published in the seventeenth century. This was his *A Brief View and Survey of the Dangerous and pernicious Errors to Church and State in Mr Hobbes's Book Entitled Leviathan*, which was published in 1676, three years after Clarendon's death. Clarendon was well aware that Hobbes was a worthy opponent and a personal friend. Hobbes, he said, was

a man of excellent parts, of great wit, some reading and somewhat more thinking. . . . Mr *Hobbes* is one of the most antient acquaintance I have in the World, and of whom I have alwaies had a great esteem, as a Man who besides his eminent parts of Learning and knowledge, hath always been looked upon as a Man of Probity, and a life free from scandal: and it may be there are few Men now alive, who have bin longer known to him than I have been in a fair and friendly conversation and sociableness.²⁹

Clarendon also tells us that it was he who introduced Hobbes to many of the cleverest men in the land, and he wished that Hobbes had spent more time in conversation than he did. Clarendon was an early reader of *Leviathan* when it appeared and Hobbes wished to know what he thought of it. Clarendon's response was that he found it very strange that a man who had such a reverence for civil

authority should publish a book that would be condemned by any European government, 'Monarchical or Democratical' and would be 'punished in the highest degree, and with the most severe penalties' for having done so.³⁰ The truth was that Clarendon, the careful historian and lawyer who placed every weight on the particular in human affairs, could never have accepted Hobbes's aspirations for a science of human nature and political society that appealed to general laws of behaviour in the way that Hobbes's system did.

Something of the effect that the publication of *Leviathan* had on Hobbes's life at the English court in Paris is captured in a letter written to Clarendon in January 1652 which gives a picture of Hobbes's standing with both the Anglican royalists and the Catholics around the Queen Mother. The letter, from Sir Edward Nicholas, followed the King's banishment of Hobbes from the court:

I hear Lord Percy is much concerned in the forbidding Hobbes to come to Court, and says it was you and other Episcopal men, that were the Cause of it. But I hear that Wat. Montagu and other Papists (to the shame of the true Protestants) were the chief Cause, that the grand Atheist was sent away.³¹

From at least this period onward Hobbes's relationship to the court and to many of those in it was, at best, contentious and ambiguous, and many were hostile. It was a state of affairs that was to last until his death. The attribution of atheism in the letter, if Hobbes had known about it, would have been of concern to him. Convicted atheists were liable to the death penalty through most of Europe, and France was no exception. Hobbes had more than one reason for looking over his shoulder and to consider returning to England.

Meanwhile in England hostility to Hobbes's great work was to be found in correspondence and was beginning to emerge from the presses. But not all the early works were hostile, and the hostility was in part muted by the difficult position in which many found themselves in the political and religious upheavals of the Interregnum. There were for many more pressing matters to occupy aspirants to posts in university or church, the natural territory in which Hobbes's enemies were likely to lie. And for some Royalists the argument of both *De Cive* and *Leviathan* appeared to support monarchic as opposed to parliamentary rule.

One of the first of the early critics was Sir Robert Filmer, the author of *Patriarcha*, which was itself so heavily attacked by John

Locke over thirty years later. Filmer's views of Hobbes appeared in 1652 in his *Observations Concerning Government*, in a section aimed at both *De Cive* and *Leviathan*. Filmer had respect for Hobbes as a philosopher and shared with him a commitment to monarchy and the need for unqualified sovereign power if civil conflict was to be avoided. But he rejected completely Hobbes's account of the state of nature. He said that Hobbes's account assumed that people sprung from the earth 'like mushrooms'³² without obligations one to another. Yet we know that parents have duties to their offspring that cannot have arisen by contract.

A long list of other critics followed Filmer as the decade moved on. These included works by John Bramhall, George Lawson, Thomas Tenison, and John Eachard. Bramhall's *Defence of True Liberty* (1655) was a continuation of his dispute with Hobbes about free will. Lawson's *An Examination of the Political Part of Mr Hobbs his 'Leviathan'* was written because he was concerned that Hobbes's philosophy was gaining a hold with the young. Hobbes is accused of being both inconsistent and contrary to Scripture, and Lawson defends a traditional law of reason against Hobbist contractual theory. Tenison's *The Creed of Mr Hobbes Examined* (1670) may be seen as an extension of the dispute with Daniel Scargill (see discussion later in this chapter). Tenison was amongst the philosophically most sophisticated of Hobbes's critics as befitted a man who was to become Archbishop of Canterbury in 1694. Eachard's work, *Mr Hobbs's State of Nature Considered*, was much lighter and was probably aimed at an undergraduate audience that Eachard wished to move away from Hobbes's work, again possibly because of the Scargill affair considered later.

Hobbes's critics were to be found occupying a variety of fronts: political theory, metaphysics, natural science, theology, education, and mathematics (and many of their works were directed at a variety of these). In truth, although there was widespread respect for Hobbes as a powerful thinker, there was also a dark awareness that he represented a threat to the deeper accepted moral and religious beliefs of the general body of Englishmen, no matter where they had stood in the Civil War. One example of hostility to *Leviathan*, perhaps more important than at first sight it might appear, was the attack on his statements that he believed that *Leviathan* should be taught in the universities. This was indeed clearly an aspiration to which

he subscribed, though how likely he believed it possible or likely is open to speculation. In their *Vindiciæ Academicarum* of 1654, written against the Paracelsian John Webster's attack on the universities, the two Oxford men John Wilkins, Warden of Wadham College, and Seth Ward, Savilian Professor of Astronomy, defended the new learning that they claimed was now part of the university teaching. But in an appendix to the book they also criticised Hobbes's aspirations for his book in terms that capture much of the hostility to Hobbes that existed amongst those who, at the Restoration, would be early members of the Royal Society, and who had been not only advocating the new learning but practising it within the Oxford Philosophical Society that met in Wilkins's lodgings in Wadham and at the house of Robert Boyle in the High Street.

There is no doubt that Wilkins and Ward overstate Hobbes's hopes. They say, 'It appears that the end he proposes to himselfe (in his *Leviathan*) is, that the World should be regulated exactly, by that model which he there exhibits, and that his reason should be the governing Reason of Mankind . . . that his *Leviathan* by *entire sovereignty imposed upon the Universities*, there to be read and publicly taught'.³³ In a way Hobbes's aspiration has been achieved, for most universities in many countries now include it in their courses on political philosophy. But that obvious point aside, what is of some interest is that Wilkins and Ward fasten on Hobbes's claims about the cause of sense for their first attack, or rather on Hobbes's claim about the cause of perception (i.e., an epistemological claim at the foundation of Hobbes's philosophy). They write: 'having determined *Sence to be nothing else but a perception of a motion made upon the Organ*, He adds, *But the Phylosophy Schooles through all the Universities of Christendome grounded upon certaine texts of Aristotle, teach another Doctrine (viz. that sence is made by a Species, &c.)*'.³⁴ In their next passage Wilkins and Ward say something surprising about current teaching in the universities. Hobbes's claim, they say, is untrue: 'The other Theory of explaining sence upon the ground of motion, was almost generally received here before his Booke came forth. Being sufficiently taught by *Descartes, Gassendus, Sir K. Digby*, and others before he had Published any thing in that kind'.³⁵

When Hobbes read this, he was outraged. In 1656 he published his reply in *Six Lessons to the Savilian Professors of the Mathematics*,

which is mostly dealing with other matters but includes a section repudiating the challenge to his originality. For the first time in his life, Hobbes tells us, he had been roused to anger by the suggestion that he had borrowed from others. In reply he wrote:

But let any man read Des Cartes; he shall find, that he attributeth no motion at all to the objects of sense, but an inclination to action, which inclination no man can imagine what it meaneth. And for Gassendus, and Sir Kenelm Digby, it is manifest by their writings, that their opinions are not different from that of Epicurus which is very different from mine.³⁶

As we have already seen, the crucial difference between Hobbes and the other three philosophers appears to be that Hobbes *identifies* sense with motion. That is to say, sense is a motion in the brain and is not something else, a change or a state in another thing called mind, and itself caused by motion in the brain. In other words Hobbes seems to be emphasising his commitment to the materialism that is at the base of his philosophical system, and that materialism, he is claiming, is not shared (or, perhaps, even understood) by others. On this he is almost certainly correct. Descartes and Digby were not materialists in Hobbes's sense, though with Gassendi the matter is less clear.

Philosophically perhaps the most important contemporary critics of Hobbes were the Cambridge-based Platonists of whom Henry More and Ralph Cudworth were the most important. It is sometimes claimed that the Cambridge Platonists were not philosophically important and that they were uninfluential. It is probably true that they did not exercise the same kind or quality of influence to compare with that of Descartes, Spinoza, Locke and Hobbes himself. But their impact on at least Locke and Leibniz was not negligible.³⁷ But it also omits reference to the considerable influence that the Cambridge Platonism had on Anglican theology throughout the remainder of the century and, indeed, beyond, which was at least considerable and some would claim, enormous. Central to their philosophy was a substance dualism that was completely and knowingly at odds with Hobbes's materialism. Indeed, it was materialism with its associated supposed denial of human freedom and individual responsibility, and the denial of a spiritual God, which was the main target for More and Cudworth. Both spent much of their lives at Christ's College, Cambridge, of which Cudworth was Master from

1654 until his death in 1688. More was at the college continuously from his undergraduate days until his death in 1687.

More rarely mentions Hobbes as his opponent, but it is not difficult to see that it is he whom he often has in mind. Cudworth more openly identifies him, but neither man was particularly concerned to vilify Hobbes in the way that many of his opponents did. Rather they both offered a positive philosophy that stood in marked contrast to Hobbes's own and for which they offered their own justification. Indeed, the Cambridge Platonist as a group shared with Hobbes (and Aristotle) a commitment to reason as supplying the distinctive attribute of man whereby true philosophy could be reached. It is this, perhaps more than any other quality, that makes it both fruitful and interesting to compare their differing philosophies. The crucial premise for both of them is that materialism is a philosophy of both mind and nature that is quite incapable of doing justice to the facts of human experience. More had in his early studies come to a great admiration of the philosophy of Plotinus as well as Plato, and it was the undeniability of a spiritual agent or force that could not be squared with materialism that dominated his philosophy. Not only did More argue that the idea of God, which we can all have could not be explained except on the supposition of God's existence but God must himself be a spiritual being, just as our own mind (or soul) could not be accounted for on the basis of mere matter. But there were not only arguments of reason that lead us to acknowledge the existence of spirit there were also a thousand examples drawn from nature that required an ontology of spirit to give sense to our experience. Materialism could not account either for magnetism or for witchcraft and ghosts, accepted on the basis of empirical evidence, or for many other phenomena. More, in keeping with his membership of the Royal Society, thus drew on the method of the new empirical sciences to argue his case. More also argued that many truths that we accept *a priori* could only be explained as a result of their having been already imprinted on the mind or soul before birth, arguing for a preexistence of the soul. If this put him in conflict with orthodox Christianity, he did not seem to mind. In another way, too, there may be a more direct connection between More and Hobbes. For More was the author of a work on moral theory, the *Enchiridion Ethicum* of 1668, which I have argued shows signs of having been in debt to Hobbes's account of a demonstrative ethics.³⁸

Cudworth was no more direct in his confrontation with Hobbes. But there are numerous references that are unambiguous, even though he is rarely mentioned by name. Thus Cudworth writes that 'It has been indeed of late confidently asserted by some, that never any of the ancient philosophers dreamed of any such thing as incorporeal substance . . . and that it was an upstart and new-fangled invention'.³⁹ Or much later, in discussing the ancient atomists, Cudworth writes of 'that prodigious paradox of Atheists, that cogitation itself is nothing but local motion' that 'a modern atheistic pretender, to wit, hath publicly owned this same conclusion, that "mind is nothing else but local motion in the organic part of man's body"'.⁴⁰ Cudworth's massive work is a powerful and sustained attempt to argue for an atomistic account of the natural world that is inseparable from a commitment to spirit as an essential ingredient. It is argued at a level of intellectual sophistication and scholarship that makes it a daunting prospect, but its failure to attract a substantial following owes less to its merit, of which there was much, especially when linked to Cudworth's unpublished works, than to the movement away from rationalist thinkers in English society in the wake of the empirical leanings of the Royal Society and especially the intellectual power of Cudworth's English successors, John Locke and Isaac Newton who had come to dominate the landscape by the end of the century.

Despite such assaults Hobbes always had plenty of friends and one of the most loyal, and in a number of ways the most attractive, was John Aubrey. Aubrey is often described as an antiquarian, which is true, but he was considerably more than this. Aubrey often acted as an intermediary between Hobbes and other leading figures. Thus in 1673 he attempted to introduce Hobbes, then eighty-five, to the, as yet relatively unknown, John Locke, asking Locke to read a manuscript of Hobbes's *Discourse of the Laws of England* (itself not published until 1681). In the letter Hobbes encourages Locke to go and see Hobbes (who actually lived only a few hundred yards from Locke) and Aubrey writes, 'The old gent is still strangely vigorous [85] if you see him (which he would take kindly) pray my service to him'.⁴¹ There is no reason to suppose that Locke took up the invitation or ever met or saw Hobbes and he was always careful to suggest, probably disingenuously, minimal knowledge of his writings.⁴²

Locke was a member of the Royal Society, and many have been puzzled that Hobbes was never elected.⁴³ He had, after all, been the tutor in mathematics of the King and had published many works of natural philosophy, and was well known to virtually all the founder members. Against this, he was old, contentious and had quarrelled bitterly with several prominent members, including the leading figure of the Society for many years, Robert Boyle, not to mention his ill-tempered exchanges with Wallis and Ward. It is no surprise that the members did not seek his company, especially as the Royal Society was often itself accused of favouring doubtful philosophies. It was much safer for all concerned to leave the Monster of Malmesbury on the outside. No doubt Aubrey tried to persuade members to another view and he even presented them with a very fine portrait of Hobbes, which still hangs in its premises, but the risks of taking him in, even if he wanted to join them, which does not seem to be a prominent wish on his part, were considerable.

An important fact about intellectual life in England in the Restoration, and in contrast with France and Italy, is that, despite a great deal of dispute amongst the varying religious factions of the reformed church in its varying hues, there was no serious religious hostility to the advances associated with the development of what we now call the natural sciences. There was no serious divide between the supporters of the church and its clerics and the advocates of the new learning. The divisions that existed were at different fractures. Thus, Wilkins, Ward and several others closely associated with the Royal Society were to become bishops at the Restoration. Others, such as Boyle, were obviously pious members of the reformed church who saw their work in the natural sciences as reinforcing religious beliefs and in no way in conflict with them. Hobbes's relationship with his fellow Christians was, as always with Hobbes, complicated and had many dimensions. He always claimed to be a life-long member of the Anglican Church, and there is a clear sense in which this must be granted. Yet many of his most famous disputes had a religious dimension to them. His clear hostility towards clerics was an important aspect of this. Another factor was Hobbes's theological erudition. His knowledge of the Bible, reflected in the hundreds of quotations, often from memory, to be found in his texts exemplifies this. This, combined with his great hostility to the Church of Rome, was bound to be an explosive mixture.

In some ways Hobbes had been born too early for many of those with whom he entered into dispute. He had been born an Elizabethan when Calvinist determinism was very much the accepted doctrine of many of his fellow members of the Church of England. His dispute with Bramhall about liberty and necessity in some ways exemplifies this. What had been a theologically acceptable position had become in his lifetime very suspect, and perhaps Hobbes had not quite kept up with the thinking. Hobbes expressed his frustrations with the church in the dedication to his *Dialogus Physicus*, first published in 1661:

Many politicians and clergy dispute with me about the right of the King. Mathematicians of a new kind dispute with me about geometry. . . . Those Fellows of Gresham [the prospective members of the Royal Society, just then being formed] who are most believed and are like masters of the rest dispute with me about physics. . . . They are all hostile to me. One part of the clergy forced me to flee from England to France; and another part of the clergy forced me to flee back from France to England. The algebraists revile me [etc.].⁴⁴

It was Robert Boyle with whom Hobbes was then disputing physics, and, as Philip Milton points out, this is the first time that Hobbes blamed the clergy for his flight from England. But there can be no doubt that many clergy had Hobbes in their sights as a possible heretic, a charge that he was anxious to avoid at all costs, especially as there was almost certainly truth in it. It was a matter that exercised him for the rest of his life, and not without reason, for both the House of Commons and the House of Lords considered bills that, if enacted might have provided a case for judging Hobbes to be guilty of heresy.⁴⁵ Hobbes defended himself in print. In the epistle dedicatory to the king that preceded *Seven Philosophical Problems* (1662) he gave what he called 'a short apology for my *Leviathan*'.⁴⁶ First of all, he says that the theology that *Leviathan* contains is not put there as his opinion but submitted to the higher authority of those that have ecclesiastical power (i.e., the king). And there is nothing in it against episcopacy, so there is nothing for any bishop to find offensive. Further, it was written at a time when 'the pretence of Christ's kingdom was made use of for the most horrid actions',⁴⁷ that is to say, during the Interregnum, when many sects were canvassing many unusual religious claims in the name of Christ. And he concludes by

reminding the king that the bishop of Durham can witness that when he was very ill in France he confirmed his total commitment to the Church of England.

In his *Consideration upon the Reputation of Thomas Hobbes* (1662) Hobbes had vigorously defended himself against the attacks of John Wallis on Hobbes's religious orthodoxy and loyalty. Believing that attack is the best form of defence he reminded the world that in the Civil War Wallis had worked for parliament and was in no position to make any accusations of loyalty or, indeed, anything else, against him.

It is, then, no accident that the person who dominates Hobbes's great debate about his mathematics was the same John Wallis who attacked him on his wider beliefs. The story of Hobbes's entry into mathematical dispute is a complex one that goes right to the heart of the nature of mathematical proof and the connections between mathematics and the physical sciences and its paradigm as a science, which Hobbes, along with virtually all important figures in the seventeenth century, had inherited from Aristotle. It was, as Douglas Jesseph has shown,⁴⁸ an issue that went to the heart of Hobbes's whole intellectual position and reached out well beyond mathematics to central questions of politics and religion. The truth is that Hobbes was not a good enough mathematician to win his arguments with Wallis, a dispute that continued from the publication of *De Corpore* in 1655 until Hobbes's death in 1679 when he was still working on a mathematical paper in response to Wallis. In the course of Hobbes's life mathematics probably advanced more than it had done for fifteen hundred years, with Descartes, Newton and Leibniz at the centre of those achievements. It is likely that Hobbes saw the dispute in overdramatic terms. His picture of knowledge was a unified one, and he may well have believed that if he were wrong on this front – a possibility he never seems to have conceded even to himself – then his whole philosophy would collapse. That was never the actual situation, for the argument of *Leviathan* would go through or not, quite independently, but Hobbes was very much committed to supplying a universal account of knowledge in which his standing as a mathematician played, at least for him, a central role. As Douglas Jesseph notes, Hobbes was himself guilty of the error he had identified in *Leviathan*: 'And as in Arithmatique, unpractised men must, and Professors themselves may often erre, and cast up false; so

also in any other subject of Reasoning, the ablest, most attentive, and most practised men, may deceive themselves, and inferre false Conclusions'.⁴⁹ It is true that the mathematical dispute has to some extent damaged his reputation as a philosopher – as opposed to his standing as a political theorist of the first rank. But this is seriously to underestimate the power and richness of his philosophical argument, an underestimate as true of his own time as it has remained since.

An interesting case of Hobbism running into conflict with authority in the later 1660s was provided by the career of Daniel Scargill. In part it is important because the issues raised show that not every contemporary of Hobbes in England was hostile to his philosophy. Indeed, as Jon Parkin has argued, there were a range of thinkers close to the Latitudinarian movement of Restoration Cambridge, associated with such thinkers at Corpus Christi College as Richard Love, John Spencer and Thomas Tenison, who were sympathetic to some of the claims of Hobbes's philosophy.⁵⁰ Scargill was admitted to Corpus in 1662 and became a fellow in 1667. In 1668 he defended two theses, both highly contentious and very Hobbist. They were, first, that the origin of the world could be explained mechanically, and, second, that the system of the universe does not prove the existence of God. He was reported by his tutor, Tenison, as also believing that 'the soul of man is but a trembling atom'.⁵¹ He also propounded a Hobbist moral relativism. His private life was also alleged to be scandalous. The college responded, and he was expelled. But, after the intervention of Gilbert Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Scargill's public recantation he was restored to his fellowship. Another theologian indebted to Hobbes was Samuel Parker, later to be Bishop of Oxford. Parker's *Discourse of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1670) drew on various Hobbist themes to argue the right of the sovereign to prescribe for religious practice. Parker was identified as a 'Young Leviathan' by several opponents, and he illustrates the reach of Hobbes's philosophy within the Anglican Church.⁵²

It is not at all surprising that religious issues dominate a large part of the reaction to *Leviathan*. After all more than half its content is directed at matters of religious doctrine. And Hobbes was always aware that his philosophy would appear to be one that placed him in potential conflict with clerics and many other believers in both the Reformed and Catholic faith. He was well aware of the risks that

he took on the religious front, not just because he was intelligent enough to see the implications of his claims but also because others soon made plain their hostility.⁵³ Despite all his battles with his contemporaries nearly all those who came into contact with him found him an engaging and generally very likeable person for whom they had great personal admiration. Furthermore he maintained the loyalty of the Cavendish family for over seventy years and many of his friendships lasted throughout his adult life. It is a remarkable fact, given his philosophy, and given the power of his opponents, who included many courtiers, churchmen and leading intellectuals such as Boyle and Wallis, that he nevertheless was able to produce so much and to live in a period of great turmoil, in comparative peace into his ninety-second year.

NOTES

1. For a far from complete list of this literature see Samuel I. Minz: *The Hunting of Leviathan* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1962, reprinted Thoemmes Press, Bristol, 1996), Appendix 'Check-list of Anti-Hobbes Literature and Allusion in England 1650–1700'. See also John Bowle: *Hobbes and His Critics* (Jonathan Cape, London, 1951) and also G. A. J. Rogers (ed): *Leviathan. Contemporary Responses to the Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (Thoemmes Press, Bristol, 1995).
2. See A. P. Martinich: *Hobbes. A Biography* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999), 85.
3. To whom Hobbes would have dedicated *Leviathan* had he not been killed in the English civil war, as Hobbes makes clear in his Dedication to that work.
4. For an account of the Tew circle see Hugh Trevor Roper's important essay 'The Great Tew Circle', *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans. Seventeenth Century Essays* (Seeker and Warburg, London, 1987), 166–230.
5. This is how Hobbes expressed the discovery in his 'Prose Life'. The translation is taken from *The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, edited by Noel Malcolm (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994), 151.
6. On the development of atomistic accounts of nature see Andrew Pyle: *Atomism and Its Critics* (Thoemmes Press, 1995) and for seventeenth-century England in particular Robert Hugh Kargon: *Atomism in England from Harriot to Newton* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1966).
7. *The Assayer* (1623), *Discoveries and Opinions of Galileo*, edited by Stillman Drake (Doubleday, New York, 1957), 237–8.
8. *EW*, I, viii.

9. See *Correspondence*, lii–liv for the history and nature of this document, which does not survive.
10. January 1641, *Correspondence*, 57.
11. January 1641, *Correspondence*, 57.
12. *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, The Correspondence*, translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, Dugald Murdoch and Anthony Kenny, Vol. III (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991), 230–1.
13. *Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. It may be that in writing this to a Jesuit Descartes was actually looking to draw the Church's attention to Hobbes's work. See Hobbes's words in his letter to Sorbière which are cited later in this chapter.
14. *Correspondence*, 119.
15. *Correspondence*, 127.
16. *EW*, VII, 468.
17. The literature on this topic is reaching large proportions. Amongst the most important texts are the following: Frithiof Brandt: *Thomas Hobbes' Mechanical Conception of Nature* (Copenhagen, 1927) esp. 9–85; Richard Tuck: 'Hobbes and Descartes' in *Perspectives on Thomas Hobbes*, edited by G. A. J. Rogers and Alan Ryan (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988); Thomas Hobbes: *Court Traité des premiers Principes*, tr. Jean Bernhardt (Paris, 1988); Perez Zagorin: 'Hobbes's Early Philosophical Development', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1993; Karl Schuhmann: 'Le Short Tract, première œuvre philosophique de Hobbes', in Karl Schuhmann, *Selected papers on Renaissance philosophy and on Thomas Hobbes*, edited by Piet Steenbakkers and Cees Leijenhorst (Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 2004), 227–57; Noel Malcolm: 'Robert Payne, the Hobbes Manuscripts, and the "Short Tract"', *Aspect of Hobbes*, Chapter 4 (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2002).
18. *Correspondence*, 33.
19. His crucial works were *Of Bodies* and *Of the Immortality of Man's Soul*, published together in Paris in 1644.
20. For Hobbes and Gassendi, as well as Brandt, the following are important: Lisa T. Sarajohn: 'Motion and Morality: Pierre Gassendi, Thomas Hobbes and the Mechanical World View', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 46 (1985), 363–79. See also her *Gassendi' Ethics. Freedom in a Mechanical Universe* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1996), esp. 118–136, and Karl Schuhmann: 'Hobbes und Gassendi', in Schuhmann, *Selected papers on Renaissance philosophy and on Thomas Hobbes*, edited by Piet Steenbakkers and Cees Leijenhorst (Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 2004), 219–25.
21. See *Correspondence*, 836.

22. *Correspondence*, 179.
23. *Correspondence*, 185.
24. *A collection of Letters Illustrative of the Progress of Science in England from the Reign of Queen Elizabeth to that of Charles the Second* (London, 1841), 86–7.
25. Gassendi was appointed Professor of Mathematics at the Collège Royal (now the Collège de France) in 1645.
26. For the publishing history and the letters that relate see the editor's Introduction and Appendix A to *De Cive. The Latin Version*, edited by Howard Warrender, Clarendon Edition of the Works of Thomas Hobbes, vol. II (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1983).
27. Martinich, *Hobbes. A Biography* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), 195.
28. On this see especially Quentin Skinner: 'Thomas Hobbes and His Disciples in France and England', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, VIII (1966), 153–67. See also Noel Malcolm: 'Hobbes and the European Republic of Letters' in his *Aspects of Hobbes* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2002), 457–545 for Hobbes's large influence on Continental thinkers in the early Enlightenment.
29. Earl of Clarendon, *A Briefe View and Survey...* (1676), 2–3. Reprinted Routledge/Thoemmes Press, London, 1996, with a shortened version in *Leviathan. Contemporary Responses to the Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, edited by G. A. J. Rogers (Thoemmes Press, Bristol, 1995), 181. The book was dedicated to King Charles and the epistle dedicatory is dated May 10, 1673, some 19 months before Clarendon's death.
30. *A Briefe View and Survey*, 8.
31. Quoted in *Correspondence*, 800.
32. Filmer's text is to be found in *Leviathan. Contemporary Responses*, 1–13.
33. *Vindiciae Academiarum*, 52, to be found in Allen G. Debus: *Science and Education in the Seventeenth Century. The Webster-Ward Debate* (Macdonald, London, 1970), 246.
34. *Science and Education*, 247.
35. *Science and Education*, 247.
36. *EW*, VI, 340–1.
37. See, for example, G. A. J. Rogers, 'Locke and Platonism', forthcoming and Alison Coudert.
38. See G. A. J. Rogers, 'Hobbes's Hidden Influence', in *Perspectives on Thomas Hobbes*.
39. *The True Intellectual System of the Universe, to which are added the Notes and Dissertations of Dr. J. L. Mosheim*, translated by John

- Harrison* (London, 1845, reprinted with an Introduction by G. A. J. Rogers, Thoemmes Press, Bristol, 1995), 35.
40. *True Intellectual System*, vol. 3, 418.
 41. *The Correspondence of John Locke*, edited by E. S. de Beer (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1976), vol. 1, 376.
 42. On their relationship see G. A. J. Rogers, 'The Intellectual Relationship between Hobbes and Locke – a Reappraisal', *Locke's Enlightenment. Aspects of the Origin, Nature and Impact of his Philosophy* (Olms, Hildesheim, 1998), 61–77.
 43. See, for example, Noel Malcolm, 'Hobbes and the Royal Society', in *Perspectives on Thomas Hobbes*, edited by G. A. J. Rogers and Alan Ryan (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988).
 44. As quoted in P. Milton, 'Hobbes, Heresy and Lord Arlington', *History of Political Thought*, XIV (1993), 508. From the Latin in *Opera Philosophica*, edited by William Molesworth, 1845, reprinted, with an Introduction by G. A. J. Rogers (Thoemmes Press, Bristol, 1999), vol. IV, 236–7.
 45. The complicated story of these bills and their implications for Hobbes is best told in Milton, 'Hobbes, Heresy and Lord Arlington'.
 46. *EW*, VII, 4.
 47. *EW*, VII, 5.
 48. Douglas M. Jesseph: *Squaring the Circle. The War Between Hobbes and Wallis* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1999).
 49. Jesseph, *Squaring the Circle*, 355–56, citing *Leviathan* (1651), 18.
 50. See Jon Parkin: 'Hobbism in the Later 1660s: Daniel Scargill and Samuel Parker', *The Historical Journal* 42 (1999), 85–108. See also James L. Axtell: 'The Mechanics of Opposition: Restoration Cambridge vs. Daniel Scargill', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 38 (1965), 102–11.
 51. See Parkin, 'Hobbism in the Later 1660s', 90.
 52. Parkin, 'Hobbism in the Later 1660s', 100.
 53. For more on Hobbes and religion see Patricia Springborg: 'Hobbes on Religion', in *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes*, edited by Tom Sorell (Cambridge, 1996) and A. P. Martinich: *The Two Gods of 'Leviathan'* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992).

19 The Reception of Hobbes's *Leviathan*

The traditional story about the reception of *Leviathan* was that it was a book that was rejected rather than read seriously.¹ *Leviathan's* perverse amalgamation of controversial doctrine, so the story goes, earned it universal condemnation. Hobbes was outed as an atheist and discredited almost as soon as the work appeared. Subsequent criticism was seen to be the idle pursuit of a discredited text, an exercise upon which young militant churchmen could cut their teeth, as William Warburton observed in the eighteenth century.² We need to be aware, however, that this was a story that was largely the creation of Hobbes's intellectual opponents, writers with an interest in sidelining *Leviathan* from the mainstream of the history of ideas. Research over the last few decades has pointed increasingly towards a rather different account of the fate of Hobbes's most notorious work.³ It is true that the book attracted a large amount of hostile comment throughout the latter half of the seventeenth century, but the reason for this was not that *Leviathan's* arguments were too absurd to be taken seriously. In fact, in many cases *Leviathan's* critics were more moved to attack the book precisely because it *was* being read and used by many different individuals and groups. *Leviathan's* arguments addressed a whole range of religious and political debates in the later seventeenth century, and its dramatic contribution to those debates could not be ignored. As a result, the book remained a live issue in the political discourse of the period, even when it was subject to official condemnation.

To understand how *Leviathan* could be part of mainstream political and religious discussion we need to look beyond the traditional story of the book's instant rejection. If we look at *Leviathan's* early reception what becomes clear is that neither Hobbes nor his book

was as notorious as they were later to become. Hobbes himself was a respectable figure, admired in England for his translation work (particularly his translation of Thucydides) and his Latin poetry. Among those who were familiar with the new natural sciences, his work on mathematics and optics promised much. Politically, his exile in France and service at Court identified him as a royalist, although his ambiguous political treatise *De Cive*, and its fashionable use of natural law theory, suggested that the theoretical basis for his royalism was unusual. Hobbes's treatment of religion in the same text raised some suspicion about the orthodoxy of his theology. That said, English readers, particularly the royalists and scientists, looked forward to great things from Hobbes as an intellectual elder statesman.⁴

What those readers got in May 1651 for their eight shillings and sixpence was an unusual folio volume with a strange title.⁵ It wasn't immediately clear what the monster from Job was supposed to signify. Brian Duppa wrote to Justinian Isham in July 1651 that 'there is another production in the press, that Affrick hath not seen a greater monster, and that is Mr Hobbes his Leviathan; a title that I wondered at first'.⁶ Guy Holland in 1653 thought the title and the volume itself 'prodigious'.⁷ There were many other reasons why the book should seem strange to an English reader. Although written, and mostly read, in English, Hobbes's masterpiece had been shaped by exposure to continental thought: politically it drew upon European natural jurisprudence; philosophically it owed much to continental science; stylistically it drew upon French traditions of burlesque and satire.⁸

Leviathan was undoubtedly strange, but at the same time there was much that was familiar. The book trades upon the English Protestant reader's familiarity with our obligation to the eternal laws of nature, the need for political authority, texts of Scripture and the thought that the Church of Rome was part of the 'Kingdome of Darknesse' (Part IV of *Leviathan*). But *Leviathan*'s readers became uncomfortably aware that for all the window dressing, its author was up to something potentially dangerous. The conventional elements within *Leviathan* are reordered towards strikingly unconventional conclusions; self-preservation appears to become the practical source of our obligation to natural law, the sovereign the source of authority for Scripture. For all the talk of God, He seems to drop out of the picture. Brian Duppa's response is typical of the characteristic unease: 'as in the man, so there are strange mixtures in the book; many

things said so well that I could embrace him for it, and many things so wildly and unchristianly, that I could scarce have so much charity for him, as to think he was ever Christian'.⁹ Alexander Ross's critique of *Leviathan* opens with a similar thought: 'I finde him a man of excellent parts, and in this book much gold, and withal much dross; he hath mingled his wine with too much water, and imbittered his pottage with too much Coloquintida'.¹⁰ As a royalist, Robert Filmer could read Hobbes's defence of sovereignty approvingly, but found Hobbes's method of getting to it deeply problematic.¹¹ In all of these cases, the mixture of acceptable and unacceptable positions caused confusion. For Hobbes's later critics, this amounted to a deliberate and characteristic rhetorical tactic which marked a distinctive departure from the scientific clarity of his earlier political work. In 1676 Edward Hyde, the earl of Clarendon, noted that Hobbes's heterodoxy was concealed beneath quotable and innocuous phrases.¹² In 1673 John Eachard commented that Hobbes's message was insinuated with 'all demureness, solemnity, quotations of Scripture, and appeals to conscience and church-history'.¹³ Thomas Tenison noted in 1670 that Hobbes's apparent references to God as a first cause tricked his readers into assuming that he was a sincere theist: 'By this argument', he wrote, 'unwary men may be, perhaps, deceived into a good opinion of your Philosophy; as if by the aids of it, you were no weak defender of natural Religion'.¹⁴ The presentation of *Leviathan's* political thought laid traps for the book's critics, Ross often finds himself agreeing with Hobbes and William Lucy's earnest attempts to analyse *Leviathan* line by line led him to more endorsement than condemnation.¹⁵ Clarendon, to whom Lucy had dedicated his critique, counselled against such methods for that precise reason.¹⁶

For all the rhetorical gloss, Hobbes's central theoretical messages were unmistakeable; the horrors of a state of war, the need for a powerful, undivided sovereignty and the relationship between protection and obedience. But beyond these positions, *Leviathan's* arguments left a host of open questions that puzzled contemporaries as much as they do scholars today; did Hobbes's contract theory sustain or subvert his absolutism? Did this make him a royalist, or some sort of rebel? Could *Leviathan* sustain a theory of toleration, or an oppressive civil religion? Was Hobbes some kind of Protestant, or did his unusual theology mask atheism? Naturally the problems of reading *Leviathan* depended upon one's initial prejudices. For recusant

writers like John Austin, *Leviathan's* rabid anti-Catholicism signalled that its author could be categorised as a Protestant divine to be categorised alongside Calvin and Bucer.¹⁷ That said, Protestant readers like Edward Bagshaw were equally capable of locating Hobbes within an acceptable Protestant tradition.¹⁸ It was undeniably harder for mainstream Anglicans and Presbyterians to come to terms with *Leviathan's* ecclesiology because the arguments he used against the ecclesiastical jurisdictions of Roman Catholicism could just as easily be turned against their own *jure divino* conceptions of church government. Nevertheless, to no side was it as clear as it has been made to seem that Hobbes's odd divinity necessarily meant that he was an atheist, and his more cautious critics were careful not to jump to that assumption. In practice this meant that the formulae in *Leviathan* could be taken seriously in a range of discursive environments, and this may tell us something about Hobbes's intentions. As the book's critics noted, *Leviathan* seduces its reader with familiar or attractive positions,¹⁹ but in swallowing down the argument one internalises a set of Hobbesian relationships. Like a virus, Hobbes's theory alters the DNA of the host discourse in such a way as to reconstitute a new creature altogether, the *Leviathan* itself.

This *viral* character may help to explain *Leviathan's* presence in a range of debates in the early 1650s, not least in controversies over religious authority. John Austin found passages that could be used to support toleration for Catholics, and republican journalist Marchamont Nedham borrowed Hobbes's anticlerical rhetoric in his own attacks upon the power of priests.²⁰ *Leviathan's* sustained assault upon clerical pretensions to civil power would be crucial in attracting and maintaining an anticlerical readership. However strange the book's theology might be (and Hobbes freely admitted that it was), its ecclesiology made the philosopher a potential ally of religious radicals against Presbyterians and Episcopalians. One of the first defences of *Leviathan* was produced by radical Independents protesting against attempts by Presbyterians to have the book banned.²¹ In 1657 John Owen, the Independent leader, was reported to admire *Leviathan* as a 'booke ye most full of excellent remarques of any'.²² Owen certainly suspected Hobbes's strange text of the gravest heterodoxy, but Hobbes's erastianism and anticlericalism made the book too useful to ignore.

With its defence of sovereignty rather than any particular form of government, *Leviathan* was no less adaptable politically. In 1651 William Rand had noted that *Leviathan's* surprising political ambiguity meant that the apparently royalist Hobbes might prove serviceable to the commonwealth.²³ His book would be even more serviceable to the Protectorate. *Leviathan's* defence of an omniscient sovereign power made it particularly attractive to supporters of Cromwell's regime after 1653, which was soon being defended in Hobbesian terms.²⁴ Writers like Thomas White and John Hall of Richmond borrowed liberally from *Leviathan* as they adapted the book's ideas in support of Cromwell's regime.²⁵ Although these writers were cautious about acknowledging Hobbes's influence, *Leviathan's* arguments were being reproduced in a variety of contexts. Such evidence makes plausible Hobbes's boast in 1656 that *Leviathan* had 'fram'd the minds of a thousand gentlemen' to obedience;²⁶ the book was being read and it was doing its work; not only transforming passive readers into responsible authors of commonwealths, but also replicating its logic among those writers deploying Hobbesian tropes. But this is not to suggest that Hobbes met with no opposition. As we have seen, there was plenty of suspicion that Hobbism was a disease, and this gave rise to determined efforts to publicise an account of *Leviathan* that would make its unacceptable features clear to readers. In what would become a distinctive tactic of Hobbes's opponents, the poison in the text was extracted and presented to the world as a sign of its danger. The first group to try this were London-based Presbyterian booksellers, who in 1652 produced an itemized list of Hobbes's unacceptable religious views in an attempt to get *Leviathan* and other works banned.²⁷ That their petitioning was unsuccessful reflects the relative political impotence of Hobbes's opponents at the time. Many of Hobbes's critics were Anglicans or Presbyterians who were on the back foot politically in the 1650s and therefore unable to achieve anything like an official condemnation. The introduction to the 1750 edition of Hobbes's *Works* suggests that 'while the church was oppressed, Mr Hobbes was not very loudly accused of atheism here at home'.²⁸ Hobbes's Anglican critics had possibly the hardest task; John Bramhall's *Catching of Leviathan*, a work that revealed *Leviathan* to be a 'rebel's catechism' was produced while he was in exile on the Continent;²⁹ while William Lucy's work was published

under a pseudonym to little acclaim.³⁰ Other critics such as John Wilkins and Seth Ward criticised Hobbes's science and his attitude towards the universities, but Ward's major refutation of Hobbes's projects was published for a scholarly audience in Latin.³¹ As the fate of their petition suggests, Presbyterians were not much more effective. Richard Baxter attempted to mobilise his followers in Cambridge against *Leviathan* soon after its publication, following this up with unsuccessful calls to have the book burned in 1655.³² The Oxford Presbyterian John Wallis spearheaded an attack upon Hobbes's mathematics, partly to discredit *Leviathan*,³³ but this may have had the effect of convincing the ascendant Oxford Independents that Hobbes was worth defending. Yet another Scottish Presbyterian reported *Leviathan* as an atheistic work to a committee of parliament in 1657, but all of these attempts failed to bring about any official condemnation, ban or burning.³⁴

Indeed, reading *Leviathan's* critics in the 1650s, one rapidly becomes aware that far from being triumphant, they often appear to be on the defensive. They readily acknowledged the success that the book was having with its various audiences. The royalist cleric William Lucy, frustrated by what he saw as a *lack* of criticism, took up his pen in 1657 complaining that he found *Leviathan* 'admir'd by many Gentlemen of sharp wits, and lovers of learning'.³⁵ The Presbyterian George Lawson felt compelled to write his *Examination of Leviathan* in the same year because it had been too popular with 'many Gentlemen and young Students in the Universities'.³⁶ Edward Hyde, later the Earl of Clarendon, trying to encourage Matthew Wren to attack Hobbes in 1659, reported that he had heard that some tutors in the Universities read *Leviathan* to their pupils, instead of Aristotle and Cicero.³⁷ There may be an element of moral panic here, not least from those critics eager to make a case for their books, but this needs to be set alongside the persuasive evidence of readers taking Hobbes seriously.³⁸

The political and religious environment in England during the 1650s thus allowed *Leviathan* to attract readers and become an established part of the political canon to be taken seriously by republicans like Harrington and Royalists like Matthew Wren.³⁹ It is even possible to go further to suggest that *Leviathan's* characteristic interventions in discourses such as natural law theory were so successful that even those authors who chose not to name him as a source

were haunted by *Leviathan's* formulae. That the state of nature was a state of war and that the only solution to it might be a distinctively Hobbesian sovereignty is a recurrent thought that stalks the pages of Wren's *Monarchy Asserted* and Locke's unpublished *Tracts on Government*.⁴⁰ By the end of the 1650s, discussions of sovereignty, state of nature, natural law, protection and obedience may well have been unthinkable without bringing to mind Hobbes's striking presentation of such positions.

The return of Charles II in 1660 marked the start of a new phase in the reception of *Leviathan* in England. An ambiguous event for Hobbes, the Restoration brought Hobbes a royal patron but at the same time the reinstallation of many of his inveterate opponents to positions of power and influence. Clarendon became Charles's chief minister and the bishop's bench included the likes of Seth Ward and Clarendon's friend George Morley. Unsurprisingly rumours soon spread that the bishops wished to try Hobbes for heresy.⁴¹ Hobbes would be protected by his powerful patrons, but the changing political environment meant that attitudes towards his works hardened considerably. The Anglican royalist account of *Leviathan* as an atheist's handbook for rebellion was soon entrenched as the official view, and Hobbism became a politically charged term of abuse. Edward Stillingfleet, a latitudinarian Anglican, fell foul of such accusations for his pre-Restoration work *Irenicum* (1660). His response was to add an appendix to the second edition (1662) in which he undertook to attack *Leviathan* directly. *Irenicum* illustrates a surprising but recurrent feature of later critiques of *Leviathan* that they often came from individuals whose work was actually too close to Hobbes for comfort.⁴² Official disapproval of Hobbes encouraged such writers to assault Hobbes in order to establish their orthodoxy. The result was that official caricatures of *Leviathan's* arguments were replicated and reinforced and any debt to Hobbes's argument was concealed or suppressed. As a result *Leviathan's* arguments were present in Restoration discourse both as caricatured primers of atheism and subversion and, in more subterranean ways, as essential analytical tools exercising a hidden and unacknowledged but pervasive form of influence.

As the 1660s wore on, there was a shift from official disapproval to the beginning of a sustained campaign against Hobbes and his work. There were several reasons for this upsurge in *Leviathan*-related

anxiety, and perhaps the most important was the changing political climate in England. The fall of the Earl of Clarendon in 1667 and his replacement by a regime sympathetic to religious toleration returned a rights-based natural jurisprudence to the political agenda, a discourse for which *Leviathan* was a useful resource. Supporters of toleration appealed to the King to protect their religious liberty in return for loyalty, an appeal to a relationship between protection and obedience that could be read in Hobbesian terms. Some of Hobbes's more quotable lines appeared in parliamentary debates on the issue.⁴³ Even Presbyterian dissenters like Louis du Moulin could at this point reassess Hobbes as an ally, albeit an extremely unlikely one.⁴⁴

These developments inevitably provoked a reaction to all things seemingly Hobbesian. *Leviathan* was investigated by a Commons Committee in 1666 for atheism, and in 1668 the rumour that the Bishops would not allow *Leviathan* to be printed again sent Samuel Pepys scurrying off to invest in an expensive second-hand copy.⁴⁵ The ecclesiastical authorities achieved their biggest anti-Hobbesian coup in 1669 with the trial and published *Recantation* of the Hobbesian Cambridge don Daniel Scargill. Scargill's offending Hobbism, organised in point form, included the propositions that 'all right of dominion is founded only in power'; second, that all moral righteousness is founded only in the law of the civil magistrate; third, that Scripture is 'made law only by the civil authority'; and lastly, 'that whatsoever the magistrate commands is to be obeyed notwithstanding contrary to divine moral laws'. All of these arguments focused upon Hobbes's apparent subversion of natural law, and the dangerous implications of his account of sovereignty.⁴⁶ The widely circulated *Recantation* put the worst possible construction upon ideas extracted from *De Cive* and *Leviathan* and left readers in no doubt that those works led to atheism and moral corruption, a view that soon came to inform popular accounts of what *Leviathan* was really about.⁴⁷

With these negative connotations, Hobbism became a common accusation on both sides of the toleration debate; Anglicans like Samuel Parker accused nonconformists of seditious Hobbism in their self-interested demands; the dissenters responded with the charge that Parker's erastianism came from *Leviathan*.⁴⁸ If *Leviathan* was useful for promoting toleration and authority in the 1650s, in the following decade its negative image made it an extremely potent rhetorical weapon against the same positions. Compromised

supporters of nonconformism and Anglicanism responded with face-saving critiques of Hobbes in an attempt to exorcise *Leviathan's* shadow. So Wolseley's *Unreasonableness of Atheism* and Thomas Tenison's *Creed of Mr Hobbes Examined* gave detailed Hobbist catechisms and creeds that redefined Hobbes as an immoral Epicurean atheist.⁴⁹ These hostile descriptions entered the popular imagination and took on a life of their own, assisted by popularisations such as John Eachard's *Mr Hobbs's State of Nature Considered* (1672).⁵⁰ *Leviathan* became emblematic for a range of unacceptable positions largely defined by Hobbes's critics.⁵¹

These critical accounts of *Leviathan* achieved an extraordinary cultural presence during the early 1670s. John Dryden's amoral stage characters were traced back to *Leviathan*, and libertine behaviour was associated with it.⁵² In what appears to be a blowback from the clerical campaign against Hobbes, the libertines reportedly adopted the clerical criticism of *Leviathan* rather than reading the book itself. In the *Character of a Coffee-House* of 1673, the author satirises the dissolute young wit who, equipped with 'only two leaves of *Leviathan*, decries scripture and takes his gospel from the Apostle of Malmesbury'. The author comments sourly that it is more probable that the wit 'ne'er read, at least understood ten pages of that unlucky author'.⁵³ Ignorance of Hobbes was also the defining feature of the *Town Gallant*, whose character, sketched in a pamphlet of 1675, represents the Gallant swearing that the *Leviathan* may 'supply all the lost leaves of Solomon, yet he never saw it in his life, and for ought he knows it may be a treatise about Catching of Sprats, or new regulating the Greenland Fishing Trade'.⁵⁴ Some began to wonder whether the obsessive pursuit of one atheist did not actually create more.⁵⁵

Leviathan's critics ended up as the popular sources for *Leviathan's* doctrines in part because the book itself was difficult to get hold of, as Pepys's experience suggests. Pepys paid twenty-four shillings in 1668, but the second-hand price was to rise still higher, hitting upwards of thirty shillings in the 1680s.⁵⁶ Publishers naturally attempted to capitalise upon this growing demand, and there were several illicit attempts to republish *Leviathan* under the original date. Two new editions appeared; they have become known as the 'Bear' and the 'Ornaments' after printers' devices that distinguish them from the original first edition, both providing evidence of the

demand for the book and the difficulties faced by those who wished to supply it.⁵⁷

But if *Leviathan* was now hard to get hold of in English, the 1660s saw the text translated into first Dutch and then Latin, developments that brought the book to the attention of a Continental audience for the first time. The fact that *Leviathan* was written in English meant that the European reception of Hobbes had been dominated by the more moderate *De Cive*. Arguably this may supply the reason why Hobbes was, as he claimed, more respected abroad than he was at home, a situation that would change with the increasing availability of his most radical text.⁵⁸ The Dutch translation of 1667 was the work of the Utrecht-educated schoolmaster Abraham van Berkel, and its appearance may be related to the debate over toleration in the Netherlands, where the protoleration States party were campaigning against the orthodox Calvinist Counter-Remonstrants.⁵⁹ As in the English context, Hobbes's anticlericalism made *Leviathan* a useful resource in support of a toleration agenda. Perhaps the best example of this is the use made of *Leviathan's* theological ideas by Spinoza in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670), a work whose political theory already owed much to a Dutch republican tradition informed by Hobbes's *De Cive*.⁶⁰ The many links with Spinoza's works would ensure that Hobbes and *Leviathan* would be closely associated with the Dutch freethinker and condemned in the same terms, both in England and on the Continent. Although this may have given *Leviathan* added *cachet* for a new generation of anticlerical radicals, it definitely marked a turning point for the reception of Hobbes on the Continent, which from 1670 onwards was largely hostile.

The 1668 Latin edition of *Leviathan* was the text most accessible to Continental readers. Published as part of Hobbes's *Opera* (and issued separately in 1670), the translation had been conceived with the European market in mind in the early 1660. But the collection also became available for purchase in London where the refusal to grant a license for a new domestic edition restricted the circulation of *Leviathan*.⁶¹ Hobbes's domestic opponents were quick to examine the text, and it soon formed the basis for critical comment. Richard Cumberland's *De Legibus Naturae* (1672) referred to the Latin text and identified passages where Hobbes had toned down offending sections of the English edition; and John Templer devoted his *Idea*

Theologiae Leviathanis (1673) to a detailed rebuttal of the theology of the new Latin edition.⁶² The fact that these critiques of the Latin *Leviathan* were also in Latin themselves meant that the new version of the work had no sooner appeared than European readers could turn to substantial challenges from Hobbes's English opponents. As a result the Latin critiques of *Leviathan* by Sharrock, Cumberland, Parker and Templer gained popularity in Europe that they struggled to achieve against the well-established vernacular canon of anti-*Leviathan* works in England.⁶³ Thus, on the Continent, by contrast with England, *Leviathan* was rapidly identified as a dangerous and heretical work, part of a genealogy of modern atheism inextricably linked to Spinoza's *Tractatus*. Formal censures and bans soon followed. In April 1674, for example, the Court of Holland introduced penalties for printing and distribution of the work.⁶⁴

If *Leviathan's* European debut proved to be controversial, those theorists who had been engaging with *De Cive* for nearly thirty years produced more extreme examples of the same evasive tactics that characterised scholars who engaged with Hobbes in England. Samuel Pufendorf is a good example of a writer whose early endorsement of Hobbes required some systematic back-peddalling after 1670. In his *Elementorum Jurisprudentiae Universalis* (1660) Pufendorf had been happy to acknowledge his debt to *De Cive*, arguing that 'although it savours somewhat of the profane, [it] is for the most part extremely acute and sound'.⁶⁵ Pufendorf was understandably less eager to acknowledge such debts when he produced his masterpiece *De jure naturae et gentium* in 1672. Although it is clear that Pufendorf is not an uncomplicated disciple of Hobbes, his natural law theory stressed the role of self-interest and the potential for conflict within the state of nature, all deeply compromising arguments in the changed intellectual environment.⁶⁶ Like those English writers dangerously associated with Hobbes's arguments, Pufendorf resorted to attacking *Leviathan* and *De Cive* in the *De Jure Naturae*. Unfortunately for Pufendorf, this was not enough to prevent accusations that his work in the end reduced to a simple Hobbesian utilitarianism.⁶⁷ Desperate to put clear intellectual distance between himself and Hobbes, he assaulted the philosopher as an Epicurean and helped himself to Richard Cumberland's critiques of *Leviathan* and *De Cive* in an attempt to establish his orthodoxy.⁶⁸ Pufendorf's reputation as an anti-Hobbesian writer thus conceals the many points of contact

between his own ultimately mainstream natural law theory and Hobbes's ideas.

By the time of Hobbes's death in 1679, *Leviathan's* complicated legacy was reflected in the various broadsides and pamphlets that appeared to mark Hobbes's passing. Naturally *Leviathan's* clerical enemies contributed to the extended obituary. *True Effigies of the Monster of Malmesbury, or Thomas Hobbes in his proper colours* was in many ways emblematic of the clerical campaign against *Leviathan* and Hobbism. The pamphlet celebrated in verse the early defeat of the Monster by opponents like Bramhall and Ward, simultaneously reinforcing the official condemnation of Hobbes as an unacceptable atheist.⁶⁹ This was literally an attempt to rewrite the story of Hobbes's reception because the poem was a systematic inversion of Cowley's ode in *praise* of Hobbes's achievement.⁷⁰ Such rewriting would form the basis for the traditional story of *Leviathan's* rejection, but even the author of this particular 'true effigy' takes us back to *Leviathan's* ambiguity when he suggests that Hobbes's books 'contain some Truths, and many a Lie, some Truths well known, but strange Impiety'.⁷¹ This ambiguity would continue to haunt those who had officially rejected *Leviathan* but whose arguments seemed to draw upon the work. The year 1680 would see Anglican clergymen like John Tillotson and Edward Stillingfleet accused of Hobbism for their authoritarian assault upon religious dissent.⁷² The next few years would see other Anglicans deploying unadulterated but unacknowledged Hobbesian arguments in support of the Crown's authority, in some instances only weeks after the University of Oxford had formally condemned and burned *Leviathan* for sedition.⁷³ *Leviathan*, although too dangerous to acknowledge, was, as always, too useful to ignore. As the *Elegie upon Mr Thomas Hobbes* suggests, those 'who his writings still accus'd in vain/were taught by him of whom they did complain'.⁷⁴ Samuel Butler put it more trenchantly when he compared those who 'condemned and stole from Hobs' with the 'French thief that murders when he Robs'.⁷⁵

If the clergy were often in denial about the continuing importance of *Leviathan*, there was one group who became less shy about celebrating the text's heterodox implications, and that was the freethinking radicals. A broadside titled *The Last Sayings*⁷⁶ gathers selective quotations from *Leviathan* and Hobbes's other works that present the philosopher as the scourge of priestcraft, superstition and religious imposture. The selection begins with the 1651 *Leviathan's*

controversial definition of religion as 'fear of power, feigned by the mind, or imagined from Tales publicly allowed'.⁷⁷ Recent research has demonstrated that *Leviathan* became an essential resource for radical enlightenment thinkers throughout Europe.⁷⁸ Hobbes's discussion of religion in chapter xii of *Leviathan* formed the basis for clandestine classics such as *De tribus impostoribus*, works that attempted to expose Moses, Mohammed and Jesus as 'imposters'. Hobbes's denial of Moses' authorship of the Pentateuch in chapter xxxiii of *Leviathan* inspired radical critiques of the Bible.⁷⁹ There can be little doubt that *Leviathan* played an important part in stimulating freethinking and deism. An epitaph from 1680 put Hobbes's role more elegantly: '*Leviathan* the great is faln . . . but see the small *Behemoths* of his progenie, survive to duel all divinitie'.⁸⁰

This radical legacy was perhaps the most visible feature of Hobbes's reception because radicals were among those most likely to openly acknowledge their dependence upon the book. But as the evidence has suggested, radicalism was the tip of an iceberg if we are thinking of *Leviathan's* more general impact. *Leviathan's* reception operated in complex ways because it contained arguments that could be and were used in a range of debates central to late seventeenth-century politics. *Leviathan* could function as a justification for both protectorate and monarchy, as a plea for toleration and an argument for persecution. In its later incarnation as a wicked book it could be represented as an apologia for tyranny and absolutism and as a source of sedition, atheism and immorality. But according to the rule that negative publicity works as effectively as positive, these demonized versions of his theory transmitted Hobbes's central tenets about the relationship between the individual and the state just as effectively to multiple audiences, and even to audiences at one remove from the text itself, as the work of apologists. That the manifestly different forms in which Hobbes's doctrines were transmitted could equally shape the thought of his critics, whether they chose to admit it or not, demonstrates the transformative powers of Hobbes's extraordinary text.

NOTES

- I. For the classic accounts of accounts of Hobbes's isolation and rejection, see S. Mintz's *The Hunting of Leviathan: Seventeenth Century Reactions to the Materialism and Moral Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes*

- (Cambridge, 1969) and J. Bowle, *Hobbes and His Critics: A Study in Seventeenth Century Constitutionalism* (Cape, 1951), but see also G. P. Gooch, *Political Thought in England: Bacon to Halifax* (London, 1915), 23; H. R. Trevor-Roper, 'Thomas Hobbes', in *Historical Essays* (London, 1957), 233; and C. Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution* (London, 1958), 91.
2. William Warburton, *Works*, ed. R. Hurd, 12 vols. (London, 1811), vol. iv, 32.
 3. See for example the groundbreaking reassessment of Hobbes's relationship with his contemporaries by Quentin Skinner in 'The Context of Hobbes's Theory of Political Obligation', in *Hobbes and Rousseau*, ed. M. Cranston and R. Peters (New York 1972), 85–108; a revised version of which can be found in Q. Skinner's *Visions of Politics* (Cambridge, 2002), vol. iii, 264–86. See also Mark Goldie, 'The Reception of Hobbes', in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450–1700*, ed. J. H. Burns and Mark Goldie (Cambridge, 1991), 589–615 and Noel Malcolm's treatment of Hobbes's reception in Europe, 'Hobbes and the European Republic of Letters', in *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford, 2002), 457–545.
 4. For Hobbes's respectability more generally, see G. A. J. Rogers, 'Hobbes's Hidden Influence', in *Perspectives on Thomas Hobbes*, ed. G. A. J. Rogers and A. Ryan (Oxford, 1988), 188–205 and for Hobbes's scientific reputation, in the same volume, N. Malcolm, 'Hobbes and the Royal Society', esp. 51–4.
 5. The price is mentioned in a letter from Hobbes's friend Robert Payne to Gilbert Sheldon in May 1651, British Library MS Harleian 6942, no. 132. For information on the prices of the various editions of *Leviathan* see Malcolm, 'The Printing of the Bear', in *Aspects of Hobbes*, 341–5.
 6. *The Correspondence of Bishop Brian Duppa and Sir Justinian Isham 1650–1660*, ed. G. Isham (Northamptonshire Record Society, 1951), vol. xvii, 41.
 7. G. Holland, *The Grand Prerogative of Human Nature* (London, 1653), 119.
 8. For Hobbes's continental connections see Malcolm, 'Hobbes and the European Republic of Letters', esp. 457–8; for the role of French satire and burlesque, see Q. Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge, 1997), 13; for Hobbes and the burlesque tradition, see Patricia Springborg, 'Mythic History and National Historiography', in *The Historical Imagination in Early-Modern Britain, History, Rhetoric and Fiction 1500–1800*, ed. D. R. Kelley and D. H. Sacks (Cambridge, 1997), 290; for the genesis of the frontispiece see Malcolm's essay 'The Title Page of *Leviathan*, Seen in a Curious Perspective', in *Aspects of Hobbes*, 200–33.

9. *Correspondence of Bishop Brian Duppa*, 41.
10. A. Ross, *Leviathan drawn out with a Hook* (London, 1653), Preface. Coloquintida is the spongy pulp of the bitter cucumber, an Asiatic plant related to the watermelon.
11. R. Filmer, *Patriarcha and Other Writings*, ed. J. Sommerville (Cambridge, 1991), 184–5.
12. Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, *Brief View and Survey of Leviathan* (Oxford, 1676), Ep. Ded.
13. John Eachard, *Some Opinions of Mr Hobbes* (London, 1673), Sig. A5r-v.
14. Thomas Tenison, *The Creed of Mr Hobbes examined* (London, 1670), 132.
15. William Lucy, *Observations, censures and confutations of divers errors in the first two chapters of Mr Hobbes his Leviathan* (London, 1656).
16. Clarendon, *Brief View and Survey*, 1.
17. [J. Austin] W. Birchley, *The Christian Moderator. Third Part* (London, 1653), 27.
18. Hobbes, *The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. N. Malcolm (Oxford, 1994), vol. i, 497–9; vol. ii, 782–5.
19. Ross, *Leviathan drawn out with a Hook*, preface.
20. See W. Birchley [J. Austin], *The Christian Moderator* (London, 1651), 13; *The Christian moderator... Third part* (London, 1653), 21, 27; M. Nedham, *Mercurius Politicus* 60 (24–31 July 1651), 950–1. For discussion see J. Collins, *The Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes*, ch. 5.
21. *The beacons quenched* (London, 1652), 13.
22. Hobbes, *Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, vol. i, 459.
23. Hartlib Papers 62/30/4a.
24. See for example John Hall of Durham's *Confusion confounded* (1654), which refers to Hobbes as 'a learned Modern', 9.
25. T. White, *The grounds of obedience and government by Thomas White* (1655); J. Hall, *Of government and obedience as they stand directed and determined by Scripture and reason four books* (1654). For discussion see J. Peacey, 'Nibbling at Leviathan: Politics and Theory in England in the 1650s', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 61/2 (1998), 241–58 and J. Collins, *The Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes*, ch. 5.
26. Hobbes, *English Works*, ed. Molesworth (London, 1839–45), vol. vii, 336.
27. L. Fawn, *A beacon set on fire* (London, 1652), 14–15.
28. Hobbes, *The moral and political works of Thomas Hobbes* (London, 1750), xxvii.
29. J. Bramhall, *Castigations of Mr. Hobbes his last animadversions, in the case concerning liberty, and universal necessity. With an appendix concerning the catching of Leviathan, or the great whale* (London, 1658).

30. See Waller's dismissive comments to Hobbes, *Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, vol. i, 295.
31. Wilkins and Ward attacked Hobbes in the *Vindiciae Academiarum* (Oxford, 1654); Ward's *In Thomae Hobbii Philosophia Exercitatio Epistolica* (Oxford, 1656), perhaps one of the most comprehensive demolitions of Hobbes's positions, failed to reach a nonspecialist audience.
32. For Baxter's campaign, see *The Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter*, ed. N. H. Keeble and G. F. Nuttall (Oxford, 1991), vol. i, 74–5; for his call to have *Leviathan* burned see Baxter, *Humble Advice* (London, 1655), 9.
33. J. Wallis, *Elenchus Geometriae Hobbiana* (Oxford, 1655), A3v–r. For the long-running dispute between Hobbes and Wallis, see D. Jessep, *Squaring the Circle: The War between Hobbes and Wallis* (Chicago, 1999).
34. T. Burton, *Diary of Thomas Burton*, ed. J. T. Rutt (London, 1828), vol. i, 348.
35. C. Pike [William Lucy], *Examinations, Censures* (London, 1657), Sig. B3v.
36. G. Lawson, *An examination of the political part of Mr Hobbs his Leviathan* (London, 1657), Sig. A2r–v.
37. Edward Hyde, quoted in the 'Appendix' to P. Barwick, *The Life of the Reverend John Barwick DD* (London, 1724), 430.
38. It is striking that in a catalogue of the best-selling books produced in 1658, *Leviathan* is listed with a large range of Hobbes's other works. W. London, *A catalogue of the most vendible books in England* (London, 1658), xii.
39. Harrington attacks *Leviathan* in *Oceana*, but acknowledges Hobbes's influence elsewhere. For Harrington's relationship to Hobbes see particularly J. Scott, 'The rapture of motion: James Harrington's republicanism', in *Political Discourse in Early Modern Britain*, ed. N. Phillipson and Q. Skinner (Cambridge, 1993), 139–63 and also Scott's *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge, 2000), 324–41. Wren positions himself on the same side as Hobbes against Harrington in his *Considerations on Mr. Harrington's Commonwealth of Oceana* (London, 1657).
40. For example, M. Wren, *Monarchy Asserted* (Oxford, 1659), 100; J. Locke, 'Second Tract on Government' in Locke, *Political Essays*, ed. M. Goldie (Cambridge, 1997), 70.
41. J. Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, vol. i, 339.
42. E. Stillingfleet, *Irenicum* (London, 1662), 32; for discussion of Stillingfleet's position see J. Parkin, *Science, Religion and Politics in Restoration England* (Woodbridge, 1999), 18–23. Noel Malcolm first

drew attention to this phenomenon with regard to Hobbes's hostile reception among Royal Society scientists in his 'Hobbes and the Royal Society'.

43. See, for example, Charles Wolseley, *Liberty of Conscience in the Magistrate's Interest* (London, 1668), 4, 17; Anon., *A Second Discourse of the Religion of England* (London, 1668), 13; for Hobbes's quotation in Parliament see Anchitell Grey, *Parliamentary Debates* (London, 1763), vol. 1, 103. Edward Seymour quoted from chapter xi of *Leviathan*.
44. Louis du Moulin wrote to Richard Baxter praising the new emphasis on toleration and expressed some surprise that 'men as ill-principled as Grotius and Selden, yea Hobbes as bad as can be, should come nearer the truth than many good men', quoted by Mark Goldie in 'Priestcraft and the Birth of Whiggism', in *Political Discourse in Early Modern Britain* ed. N. Phillipson and Q. Skinner (Cambridge, 1993), 209–31.
45. Pepys paid 24 shillings and noted that new copies were selling for 30. Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. R. Latham and W. Matthews (London 1971, 1995), vol. ix, 298–9.
46. The Scargill affair has been discussed most recently by J. Parkin in 'Hobbesism in the Later 1660s', *Historical Journal* 42/1 (1999), 85–108, but also in detail by C. L. S. Linnel, 'Daniel Scargill, A Penitent Hobbist', *Church Quarterly Review* CLVI (1953), 256–65. A much more substantial consideration of the manuscript sources is given in J. Axtell, 'The Mechanics of Opposition: Restoration Cambridge v. Daniel Scargill', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 38 (1965), 102–11. For briefer discussions see Mintz, *Hunting of Leviathan*, 50–2; John Twigg, *The University of Cambridge and the English Revolution* (Woodbridge, 1990), 259–60.
47. The text can be read either in the original *Recantation of Daniel Scargill* (Cambridge, 1669), or as it is reproduced in Masters, *History of Corpus Christi College*, Appendix, or more accessibly in C. L. S. Linnel, 'Daniel Scargill, 'A Penitant "Hobbist"', *Church Quarterly Review* 156 (1955), 257–60.
48. For identification of Parker as a Hobbist see Richard Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (London, 1696), part II, 123; John Humfrey, *A Case of Conscience* (London, 1669), 11, 12; Henry Stubbe, *Rosemary and Bayes* (London, 1672), 18; Anon., *Insolence and Impudence Triumphant* (London, 1669), Sig. A3r. Even Anglican clergyman Herbert Thorndike thought that Parker sounded like Hobbes, as did Locke. Herbert Thorndike, *Discourse* (London, 1670), 113–14; Locke, *Political Essays*, ed. M. Goldie (Cambridge, 1997), 212–14.
49. C. Wolseley, *The Unreasonableness of Atheism* (London, 1669), 193–4, 197–9; Thomas Tenison, *The Creed of Mr Hobbes Examined* (London,

- 1670), 8–9. Wolseley had campaigned for toleration; Tenison had been Scargill's tutor.
50. Eachard produced another satirical attack on Hobbes the following year, *Some Opinions of Mr Hobbs Considered* (London, 1673).
 51. It is symptomatic of such developments that commonplace book entries from the 1670s purporting to list Hobbesian positions do not quote *Leviathan* at all, but rather Scargill's *Recantation* and Tenison's *Creed*. British Library Additional MS 8888; British Library Sloane MS 1458.
 52. Particularly the characters of Almanzor and Boabdelin from Dryden's *The Conquest of Granada* (1672), see L. Teeter, 'The Dramatic Use of Hobbes's Political Ideas', *English Literary History* 3 (1936), 140–69; J. A. Winterbottom, 'The Place of Hobbesian Ideas in Dryden's Tragedies', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 57 (1958), 665–83.
 53. Anon., *The Character of a Coffee House* (London, 1673), 4–5.
 54. Anon., *Character of a Town Gallant* (London, 1675), 7.
 55. H. Atherton, *The Christian Physician* (London, 1683), 4.
 56. Noel Malcolm suggests that this might have been due to the effect of the fire of London as well as Hobbes's growing notoriety. Malcolm, 'The Printing of the Bear', in *Aspects of Hobbes*, 343–5.
 57. See particularly the Noel Malcolm's extraordinary piece of detective work, 'The Printing of the Bear'.
 58. For Hobbes's claim, see particularly his *Mr Hobbes Considered* (p. 51) in *English Works*, IV, 435. For the best study of Hobbes's continental reception see Malcolm, 'Hobbes and the European Republic of Letters'.
 59. For Abraham van Berkel's translation see Malcolm, 'Hobbes and the European Republic of Letters', 465–6; C. W. Shoneveld, 'Thomas Hobbes and Holland' in *Intertraffic of the mind* (Leiden, 1983), 29–62; M. J. Petry, 'Hobbes and the Early Dutch Spinozists', in *Spinoza's Political and Theological Thought*, ed. C. de Deugd (Amsterdam, 1984), 150–70.
 60. For Hobbes and the Dutch republican tradition see Noel Malcolm, 'Hobbes and Spinoza', in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450–1700*, ed. J. Burns and M. Goldie (Cambridge, 1991), 547–50; see also H. Blom, *Morality and Causality in Politics* (Rotterdam, 1995), ch. 6; M. J. Petry, 'Hobbes and the Early Dutch Spinozists'.
 61. For the publishing history of Hobbes's work and the censorship that he faced during this period see P. Milton, 'Hobbes, Heresy and Lord Arlington', *History of Political Thought* 144 (1993), 501–46.
 62. See for example R. Cumberland, *De Legibus Naturae* (London, 1672), 45, 421; J. Templer, *Idea theologiae Leviathanis* (London, 1673).
 63. Malcolm, 'Hobbes and the European Republic of Letters', 477.
 64. Malcolm, 'The Printing of the Bear', 380–1; Petry, 'Hobbes and the early Dutch Spinozists', 160; Schoneveld, *Intertraffic*, 58–9.

65. Pufendorf, *Elementorum Jurisprudentiae Universalis*, trans. W. A. Oldfather (Oxford, 1931), vol. ii, Pref. xxx.
66. Hobbes's influence on Pufendorf is abundantly illustrated in Fiammeta Palladini's *Samuel Pufendorf: Discepolo di Hobbes* (Bologna, 1990).
67. For an overview of this controversy see F. Palladini, *Discussioni seicentesche su Samuel Pufendorf* (Bologna, 1987), 99–122; K. Haakonssen, *Natural law and moral philosophy* (Cambridge, 1997), 43–6.
68. For Pufendorf's use of Cumberland see Palladini, *Samuel Pufendorf*, 189–244, and Parkin, *Science, Religion and Politics*, 205–12.
69. Anon., *True Effigies of the Monster of Malmesbury, or Thomas Hobbes in his proper colours* (London, 1680).
70. Abraham Cowley, 'Pindarique Odes', in *Poems* (London, 1656), 26–9.
71. Anon., *True Effigies*, 4.
72. See John Marshall, 'The Ecclesiology of the Latitude-Men 1660–89: Stillingfleet, Tillotson and "Hobbism"', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 26 (1985), 407–27.
73. For the best discussion of the Judgement and Decree of the University of Oxford in 1683, see R. A. Beddard, 'Tory Oxford' in *The History of University of Oxford*, ed. N. Tyacke (Oxford, 1997), 892–905; for examples of the use of Hobbes's ideas at around the same time, see T. Pomfret, *Passive obedience, stated and asserted* (London, 1683), 11–13; T. Gipps, *Three sermons preached in Lent and summer assizes* (London, 1683), 22–3, 33, 49, 56, 68, 69, 72, 75.
74. Anon., *An Elegie upon Mr. Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury lately deceased* (London, 1679), brs.
75. S. Butler, *Satires and Miscellanies*, ed. R. Lamar (Cambridge, 1928), 241.
76. Aubrey attributes the broadside to the radical freethinking deist Charles Blount, *Brief Lives*, I, 356, but see also Malcolm, *Correspondence*, vol. ii, 793–4.
77. *Leviathan*, vi, 36, 42/26. Note the alteration to the Latin, recorded in Curley's edition of *Leviathan*, 31, n. 3.
78. Malcolm, 'Hobbes and the European Republic of Letters', 484–97.
79. Malcolm, 'Hobbes, Ezra and the Bible: The History of a Subversive Idea', in *Aspects of Hobbes*, 383–481.
80. Anon., *An Elegie upon Mr. Thomas Hobbes*.

20 Clarendon against *Leviathan*

The early reception and recognition given to Hobbes's philosophy in England and on the continent forms one of the important chapters in English and European intellectual history.¹ A checklist published by Samuel Mintz in 1962 of anti-Hobbes writings and allusions in England during the period 1650–1700 contains nearly 100 titles and indicates not only the magnitude of Hobbes's impact upon the intellectual and cultural life of his time but the breadth of the reaction provoked by his unorthodox ideas.² We can be pretty sure that Mintz's checklist is not exhaustive, however, as there must have been other works published in England during this period containing critical references to Hobbes that have not yet come to notice. One of the authors the checklist omits is Gilbert Burnet, who criticized 'the infernal *Leviathan*' in a sermon he preached in London in December 1674.³ Another is John Locke. While Locke does not mention Hobbes in his political or philosophical writings, he was much aware of and opposed to a number of Hobbes's basic ideas. In his *Second Treatise of Government*, for example, the statement in section 57 that 'the end of Law is not to abolish and restrain, but to preserve and enlarge Freedom. . . . Freedom is not, as we are told, A Liberty for every Man to do what he list', pointedly contradicts both Hobbes's conception of freedom in the state of nature and the opinion expressed in *Leviathan*, chapter xxi, that law is a restraint on freedom.⁴

To turn from the omissions to the inclusions, a number of the authors named in Mintz's list were clergy who were also theologians and philosophers, including some Anglican bishops; others were lay thinkers and political theorists and publicists. A unique figure among them was Edward Hyde, earl of Clarendon (1609–74),

lawyer, politician, royal minister, historian, and one of the foremost English statesmen of the seventeenth century. Apart from his political career, Clarendon is most celebrated for his monumental *History of the Rebellion*, the account of the revolt against the monarchy of Charles I that he wrote over a period of years and that has attained a classic status in English historiography. His political treatise, *A Brief View and Survey of The Dangerous and Pernicious Errors in Church and State, in Mr Hobbes's Book, Entitled Leviathan*, posthumously published in 1676, is among the most important critical discussions of Hobbes's political theory to appear in the later seventeenth century.⁵

Clarendon's relationship to Hobbes was personal as well as intellectual, since they were old friends. In the *Survey*, he recalled the philosopher as 'one of the most antient acquaintances I have in the World', adding that 'there are [probably] few Men now alive who have been longer known to him than I have bin in a fair and friendly conversation and sociablenes'.⁶ Their association went back to the peaceful days of the 1630s before the English civil war, though when and how they first met is not recorded. It might have been among the men coming mostly from Oxford University who used to gather at Great Tew, the Oxfordshire house of Clarendon's dear friend the youthful Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland, for conversation on theological, religious, and philosophical subjects. For a few years during the 1630s, the Tew circle, whose members included such distinguished minds as William Chillingworth and John Hales, was one of the centres of advanced thought in England. Clarendon, on whom its rational spirit of religious breadth and intellectual examination had a lasting effect, subsequently commemorated it, together with the unique personality of Falkland himself, in some of the finest pages of the *History of The Rebellion* and of the autobiographical *Life* which he wrote in his last years.⁷ Although the royalist Falkland, who fell in the civil war, was also a friend and admirer of Hobbes, Clarendon nowhere mentions the philosopher as part of the Tew circle, and it is unlikely that he ever belonged to that group.⁸

The two might also have first become acquainted with each other in London, where Clarendon had a number of noted friends, vividly recalled in his *Life*, some of whom were likewise friends of Hobbes.⁹ Clarendon's London friendships dated from the later 1620s, the period in which, after leaving Oxford, he was a law student at

the Middle Temple. They included lawyers, scholars, and literary men, one of the latter being the poet-playwright Ben Jonson, who was Hobbes's familiar friend, according to Aubrey.¹⁰ Hobbes's name does not appear in Clarendon's *Life*, however, and it is probable that they originally met through Clarendon's father-in-law Sir Thomas Aylesbury, whose daughter he took as his second wife in 1634 and with whose family he lived after his marriage.¹¹ A high royal official, Aylesbury was also a patron and devotee of science and mathematics who gave generous support to the work of Thomas Hariot and Walter Warner, two of the leading scientific men of their time.¹² Warner not only was a friend of Hobbes but was likewise in communication with the group of Hobbes's personal friends and associates at Welbeck Abbey, namely, William Cavendish earl of Newcastle, the owner of Welbeck, his brother Sir Charles Cavendish, and his chaplain, Robert Payne, all of whom shared a keen interest in science.¹³ Newcastle's cousin, William Cavendish earl of Devonshire, Hobbes' own patron, employer, and pupil, had an estate at Byfleet in Surrey, not far from Cranborne Lodge, Aylesbury's country residence in Windsor Forest. A letter of October 1636 from Robert Payne to Hobbes, who was then at Byfleet, indicates that he expected Hobbes to visit Walter Warner at Cranborne Lodge.¹⁴ Clarendon could thus have first come to know Hobbes on some occasion at Aylesbury's house, where Warner often stayed for long periods.¹⁵

In the revolution of the 1640s, during which civil war swept away the government of Charles I, Clarendon and Hobbes were both royalists who spent many years in exile because of their political allegiance. Hobbes fled to France in November 1640, immediately after the beginning of the Long Parliament, fearing that he might be in danger on account of the opinions he had expressed in favor of absolute monarchy in his first political treatise, *The Elements of Law*. He remained abroad until 1652, when he returned to England following the publication of *Leviathan*. As a member of the Long Parliament, Clarendon, after first cooperating with the opposition to the crown, soon took up the cause of Charles I. He became the main author of the king's political declarations and remained his loyal servant and adviser during the civil war. After the king's defeat and execution, he served in France as the most trusted councillor of his son and heir Charles II. He returned home to England with the king in 1660 upon the triumphant restoration of the Stuart monarchy, of which

he was the principal architect. He was appointed Lord Chancellor and given an earldom for his exceptional services to the crown, acting as Charles II's chief minister until he fell from power in 1667. Dismissed from office by the king, impeached by parliament, and under attack by his many political enemies, he again sought refuge in France, where he died in 1674.

During these last years of his life which he spent in exile, Clarendon read and wrote continually to ease his mind and occupy his days. To this period of enforced retirement from his country belong the completion of his *History of The Rebellion*, his autobiography, a collection of essays on a range of subjects, reflections on the psalms of David, and also his critique of *Leviathan*.¹⁶ He was familiar with all three of Hobbes's major political works and had long disagreed with large parts of his political philosophy. In 1640, like some of the other members of the Tew circle, he read Hobbes's *The Elements of Law*, which circulated widely in manuscript copies before its publication a decade later. The notes he made on this treatise, which survive among his papers, indicate some of his reservations regarding it.¹⁷ The *Survey* mentions various particulars of his long association with Hobbes. When residing in Jersey in 1646, he requested and received from Hobbes in Paris a copy of the latter's *De Cive*, which had appeared in 1642 in a small edition.¹⁸ Later in Paris he saw Hobbes frequently at the time *Leviathan* was being printed in England in 1651. Hobbes told him that he would dislike the book when he read it and mentioned some of its conclusions. Asked then by Clarendon why he would publish such a work, Hobbes answered, 'The truth is, I have a mind to go home'. This was an allusion to the doctrine in *Leviathan* which held that subjects' duty of obedience to their sovereign ceased when the latter could no longer protect them and hence justified submission to the new revolutionary regime in England that succeeded the monarchy of Charles I. To a royalist like Clarendon, who never acknowledged the legitimacy of any English government during the Interregnum of 1649–60, Hobbes's view was of course anathema. As soon as *Leviathan* appeared, he says, he obtained a copy which he read 'with much appetite and impatience'. When Hobbes desired his opinion of it, he responded with a vigorous censure of its contents and stated that any government in Europe would be justified in punishing the author of such a book.¹⁹

While in Paris Hobbes had been appointed tutor in mathematics to the future Charles II, then Prince of Wales, and after the publication of *Leviathan*, he presented the young king with a beautiful manuscript copy of the work. Its teachings not only displeased the French authorities but aroused so much condemnation among Charles's advisers and courtiers that Hobbes was barred from the English court in exile and compelled to leave Paris at the end of 1651. Clarendon was instrumental in the dismissal of the philosopher, who soon afterward went back to England, where the revolutionary government left him undisturbed.²⁰

Clarendon had probably been thinking for a considerable time of writing something against Hobbes's political philosophy. In 1659 he tried unsuccessfully to induce Matthew Wren, the son of the bishop of Ely, to undertake an answer to *Leviathan*. Clarendon, who was writing from Brussels in July 1659, transmitted his request to Matthew Wren through his English correspondent, the royalist clergyman Dr. John Barwick. Wren declined to write against Hobbes because he considered himself unequal to the task, although Clarendon thought otherwise.²¹ Matthew Wren was the author of two works published in 1657 and 1659 directed against the republican theories of James Harrington which actually show the influence of Hobbes.²² Clarendon, concerned about reports that some of the tutors at Oxford were teaching the book to their pupils, declared to Wren that

Mr. Hobbs is my old Friend, yet I cannot absolve him from the Mischief he hath done to the King, the Church, the Laws, and the Nation; and surely there should be enough to be said to the Politicks of that Man, who having resolv'd all Religion, Wisdom, and Honesty into an implicate Obedience to the Laws established, writes a Book of Policy, which I may be bold to say, must be, by the establish'd Laws of any Kingdom or Province in Europe, condemn'd for impious and seditious; and therefore it will be very hard, if the Fundamentals of it, be not . . . overthrown.²³

In 1663 William Lucy bishop of St. David's published an attack on *Leviathan* which he dedicated to Clarendon.²⁴ The latter records in the *Survey* that following Charles II's restoration, Hobbes was frequently at the king's court, 'where he had too many disciples', and also visited Clarendon, who received him kindly and invited him to come often. But on hearing from so many people of the statesman's bad opinion of *Leviathan*, Hobbes refrained from seeing him again.²⁵

It was not until his second exile that Clarendon found the time to write a critique of Hobbes's book. He finished the *Survey* in April 1670 while living in Montpellier. Its dedication, addressed to Charles II, was dated 10 May 1673 at Moulins, where he had moved two years previously. His younger son Laurence, who visited him in France in the spring of 1673, took the manuscript back to England. Three years elapsed and Clarendon had died before its publication at Oxford in 1676.²⁶ At the time he wrote it, as he noted in the Introduction, he had as yet not seen any answer to 'the most mischievous parts of [*Leviathan*] as to Civil Government', although by then Hobbes had already been the subject of numerous attacks.²⁷ Having read several of the latter after he completed his own work, Clarendon also commented that they did not cause him to want to change it or to consider what he had written as any the less pertinent. He also said that 'probably many of the things which I offer are more vigorously urg'd, and expressed in some of the other answers'. Clarendon does note in his Introduction, however, that other critics of Hobbes have discovered 'many gross errors, and grosser oversights in those parts of Science in which Mr Hobbes would be thought to excel';²⁸ a reference no doubt to Hobbes's mistakes in geometry, which became a subject of controversy. Although Hobbes was often involved in controversies with his critics, it is not surprising that he made no reply to Clarendon's book, given that he was 88 years old in 1676 and died three years later.

The *Survey* is a lengthy book of over three hundred pages consisting of thirty-two unnumbered chapters, each of which deals with either one or a group of chapters in the same sequence in which they appear in *Leviathan*. The discussion is selective, touching merely in passing on certain parts of Hobbes's treatise to concentrate mainly on its conception of man, politics, government, and religion. Although Clarendon paid tribute to Hobbes's great reputation as a philosopher, his learning and wit, and *Leviathan's* fame and literary distinction, he considered its principles 'most destructive to the Peace both of Church and State', and deplored 'the unhappy impression they have made on the minds of too many'.²⁹ One of the main charges he reiterates against *Leviathan*, and for which he could not forgive Hobbes, was the book's importance in rationalizing and approving subjection to Oliver Cromwell and the revolutionary governments of the Interregnum. It 'was printed & publish'd', he observed, 'in the highest time of Cromwell's wicked Usurpation, for the vindication

and perpetuating whereof, it was contriv'd and design'd, and when all Legal power was suppress'd'. It served to absolve 'all men from their Allegiance [to the king], and industriously perswaded all sorts of men, that Cromwell was their true and lawful Sovereign, and that it was folly and guilt, and inevitably deserved ruin, not to adhere to him, and assist him against any opposition soever'. He singled out in particular *Leviathan's* famous Review and Conclusion, describing it as 'an abridgment' of 'the most contagious poison that runs through the Book', in which Hobbes, in 'a sly address to Cromwell', took it upon himself 'very positively to declare (which no man had ever presumed to do before) the precise time when Subjects become obliged to submit to the Conquerors'.³⁰

Underlying his negative attitude toward Hobbes' work was a fundamental difference in intellectual and political outlook. Clarendon was a professional lawyer deeply respectful of the tradition of English common law, a widely read student of history, an orthodox Anglican, and a sagacious, profoundly experienced statesman whose political thought was grounded not in philosophy but in a strong understanding of his country's history, its government and legal system, political culture, and national character. He deemed Hobbes a speculative writer, an 'Artist' and an 'Architect in State and Policy', lacking practical knowledge of politics, 'who doth despise all Precedents, and will not observe any Rules of practice'. Hobbes, he noted, would 'erect an Engine of Government by the rules of Geometry' and wished to persuade men 'to change a Government they have bin for many hundreds of years happy under (tho with some vicissitudes of fortune) for an imaginary Government by his Rules of Arithmetic and Geometry, of which no Nation hath ever yet had the experiment'.³¹ For Clarendon, experience and practice were a much better guide to policy than theory or abstract reason. He was a conservative thinker, profoundly attached to the institution of monarchy in England and convinced that the English constitution was the best of its kind because it provided equally, under law, for both the powers of the king and the liberty of subjects. What gives Clarendon his considerable significance as an early commentator on *Leviathan* was that no other contemporary critic of Hobbes had held such great political responsibilities or was more in touch with the English past and historical experience, including the recent civil war and breakdown of government, as the source and inspiration of his own political reflections and critique.

In the course of his work Clarendon challenged many propositions and conclusions in *Leviathan*. Limitations of space make it impossible to notice most of his observations, which are generally probing and well worthy of consideration. Broadly speaking, however, his criticisms of Hobbes's treatise fall into three main categories: first its false view of human nature; second its misconception of the origin of government and the nature of sovereignty and law; and third its unorthodox treatment of religion.

I. HUMAN NATURE

Clarendon protested that Hobbes vilified and degraded human nature by falsely picturing man as entirely self-regarding and imputing to him such inherent 'baseness and villany' as to render him unfit to govern the rest of creation as God had appointed him to do. His attitude on this subject probably had its origins in the enduring influence upon him of Falkland and some of the other members of the Tew circle, by whom the virtues of mutual friendship were highly valued and who preserved the tradition of Erasmian humanism, which strongly opposed the conception of human nature as incapable of good and completely corrupted by original sin. Nothing could be more contrary to the divine honor and dignity, Clarendon believed, than to affirm that God had left 'his master workmanship, Man', in a condition of war of every man against every man, inclined to all the malice, force, and fraud that would promote each one's personal pleasure or profit. The only reason Hobbes had for lowering man to 'this degree of Bestiality', he held, was to fit him 'to wear those Chains and Fetters' which the philosopher had provided for him. By divesting him of his benevolence towards others, Hobbes deprived man of his greatest happiness and glory. In *Leviathan's* portrayal, according to Clarendon, man, despite his being endowed with reason and created in the likeness of God, is the only creature in the world whose

malignity of . . . nature, and the base fear . . . inseparable from it, is oblig'd for his own benefit, and for the defence of his right, to worry and destroy all his own kind, until they all become yoked by a Covenant and contract that Mr. Hobbes hath provided for them, and which was never yet entred into by any one man, and is in nature impossible to be entred into.³²

Clarendon dismissed as weak and trivial the proofs Hobbes supplied to support his 'magisterial Assertions against the dignity and probity of man, and the honor and Providence of God'. That people locked the doors of their houses, for instance, and shut their money up in chests was not an argument that they believed the whole of mankind was disposed to theft and robbery; it merely showed their awareness that bad men existed who might do injuries to others if they had the opportunity. Even were there to be only a single thief in a city or several drunkards in a town, everyone would still have good reason to lock up their doors and money and to go armed to avoid violence or indignity.³³

Clarendon likewise rejected Hobbes's claim that the law of nature required men to regard each other as equals by nature. While conceding that such equality might be the case with regard 'to the essentials of human Nature', he insisted that inequality between men in their capacity for government and in such things as intelligence, judgement, and foresight was an obvious fact, observable even among those who had the same advantages in education, industry and virtuous inclinations. All ages and human experience, he added, have agreed in the conclusion which Hobbes derided 'that Nature itself hath a bounty which she extends to some men in a much superior degree then she doth to others'.³⁴

What struck Clarendon as particularly illogical was that while Hobbes 'demolished the whole frame of nature for want of order to support it' and posited a war of all against all as man's natural condition in which injustice did not exist, he nevertheless held that nature had prescribed a body of laws to all men that were immutable and eternal by which they could obtain peace. 'If Nature', he inquired,

hath thus providently provided for the Peace and Tranquillity of her Children, by laws immutable & eternal, that are written in their hearts: how come they to fall into that condition of war, as to be every one against every one, and to be without any other cardinal virtues, but of force and fraud?³⁵

2. GOVERNMENT AND SOVEREIGNTY

Clarendon considered Hobbes's explanation of the generation and basis of the commonwealth as an entirely imaginary construct. He

could discover no historical justification for the theory that government and political subjection arose from the consent of the people, and altogether denied Hobbes's hypothesis that government could ever have been originally instituted by an assembly of men equally free, or that such an assembly had ever elected the person charged with exercising sovereignty over the polity. Similarly, he judged it impossible that a multitude of individuals had ever covenanted with one another to oblige themselves for the sake of their common peace and defense to allow the sovereign an unlimited power over their persons, liberty, and property. Hobbes's account had taken care to demonstrate that the sovereign was not a party to any covenant with his subjects and hence assumed no obligations to them whose violation on his part would constitute injury and injustice. Clarendon could find no merit in this arrangement, in which the subjects covenant with each other to submit themselves to government but make no direct promise of obedience to the sovereign. Much more conducive to security, he thought, was a covenant between sovereign and subjects based on mutual promises by which the latter 'put themselves under the [sovereign's] power' and 'he promises not to use that power wantonly or tyrannically'. A covenant of this kind, Clarendon asserted, which placed equal obligations upon the sovereign to be just and the subjects to obey, 'had bin a more natural and equitable institution, and more like to have lasted, having in it the true essential form of contracts, in which it will never be found that one party covenants and the other not'.³⁶

Of all the unreasonable conceptions Clarendon found in *Leviathan*, the one he disliked most was Hobbes's doctrine of a 'monstrous' and 'illimited Sovereign' who could blow away the liberty and property of subjects with his breath. He sought to expose its flaws in both his discussion of *Leviathan's* treatment of the liberty of subjects and in other parts of the *Survey*. In the Hobbesian commonwealth, he pointed out, subjects might have rights of liberty and property against the invasion and force of fellow subjects, but towards the sovereign these were of no use or significance at all. The only liberty or property they possessed with respect to the sovereign was what the latter permitted them, such as the freedom to buy and sell, or to choose their living place and trade, or to raise their children, and the like. Yet Hobbes was jealous 'that even this liberty should make men imagine that the Sovereign power should be in any way limited', for

he had made sure that whatsoever the sovereign might do to a subject on whatever pretext, he could never be guilty of injury or injustice. Clarendon's criticism on this point ignored, in fact, Hobbes's comment in *Leviathan*, chapter xviii.6, that 'they that have sovereign power may commit iniquity, but not injustice, or injury in the proper signification'.³⁷ This statement is explained by the fact that Hobbes defined injustice and injury strictly as a breach of covenant. What mattered for Clarendon, however, was that in Hobbes's conception the subject was deprived of any legal recourse against wrongful acts by the sovereign. Clarendon wondered at the philosopher's failure to see that 'by his so liberal taking away, he hath not left the Subject anything to enjoy even of those narrow concessions which he hath made to him'. For how could anyone believe he had the liberty to buy and sell or choose his trade, abode, or anything else, if the sovereign could confiscate his goods at will or command him to live where he had no wish to live or do what he had no mind to do?³⁸

Clarendon considered Hobbes's theory of sovereignty a menace to the security of states. What could more threaten ruin to even the greatest prince, he demanded, than for his subjects to believe that their liberty and property were entirely at the sovereign's will, and that nothing the sovereign could do to them on whatever excuse, including taking away their lives and estates, could be called an injustice or injury? In such a case,

what greater insecurity can any Prince be in or under, then to depend upon such subjects? And alas! What security to himself or them can the Sword in his hand be, if no other hand be lift upon his behalf, or the Swords in all other hands be directed against him, that he may not cut off their heads when he hath a mind to it? Of all calamities, he averred, war was the greatest, and the worst of all wars was civil war.³⁹

This must inevitably result, he predicted, if the people were to understand that their sovereign can take from them all they have, even their lives, without injustice, whenever he wished, and thus conclude that 'their obedience to him will be more hurtful to them than their disobedience'.⁴⁰ Clarendon was particularly concerned about the consequences of Hobbes's doctrine of sovereignty upon the subject's right to property. He pronounced it a 'preposterous foundation to support a Government' to declare that subjects possessed no property in anything that excluded the sovereign from the right to dispose

of it. No monarch in Europe, he thought, would retain his sovereignty for a year if he were to issue such a declaration. Even William the Conqueror had made certain after the Conquest to secure Englishmen in their property rights as well as in their earlier laws and customs, and the later laws and acts of parliament of successive English kings had gratified their subjects by providing them with new security that contributed to the honor and glory of the king and the happiness of the people. Clarendon insisted that the property of the subject and power of the prince were perfectly consistent. In a rhapsodic passage on the sanctity of property, without which, he said, no one could receive anything from an ancestor or leave anything to his children, he affirmed that it was the importance and delight in this principle that produced the agreement between the sovereign and subject and led also to the beauty of building and the cultivation of the earth and industry, because men could then be secure that they and their children would dwell in the houses they had built and reap the harvest of the lands they had sown. 'Whatsoever is of Civility and good Manners', he stated, 'all that is of Art and Beauty, or of real and solid Wealth in the World, is the product of this paction, and the child of beloved Propriety'. It was property that took mankind out of barbarism, and 'nothing but security in the same can preserve us from returning to it again'.⁴¹

In opposition to Hobbes's type of sovereign, to which the philosopher had given the exalted Old Testament titles from the book of Job of 'the great Leviathan and Mortal God',⁴² Clarendon favored an abated, tempered sovereignty without the uncontrolled powers which he was convinced subjects would never tolerate, claiming:

Where the obligations between sovereign and subjects are best observed, Sovereignty flourishes with the most lustre, and security; Kings having still all the power remaining in them, that they have not themselves parted with, and released to their Subjects, and their Subjects having no pretence to more liberty or power then the King hath granted... them: and both their happiness, and security consists in containing themselves within their own limits.⁴³

There is no doubt that he regarded this conception to be in accord with the historical character of the English constitution, in which the king was both genuinely sovereign and yet limited in various respects. It is not surprising that he disagreed with Hobbes's

contention, which he attributed to the philosopher's 'notorious ignorance' of England's government and laws, that the cause of the civil war was the prevailing opinion that sovereign power in England was divided between the king and the two Houses of Parliament. Not only was this opinion unknown, he said, until the rebellion began, but the English monarchy 'was supported by as firm principles of Government as any Monarchy in Europe'. But just as the sovereignty devised by Hobbes was vulnerable to the irregular passions of the people,

so the late execrable Rebellion proceeded not from the defect of the Laws, nor from the defect of the just and ample power of the King, but from the power ill men rebelliously possessed themselves of, by which they suppressed the strength of the Laws, and wrested the power out of the hands of the King.⁴⁴

Clarendon was equally dissatisfied with Hobbes's notion of law or, in modern terms, his legal positivism, the position that the civil law, as the rule of the commonwealth which prescribed right and wrong to subjects, had its source solely in the will of the sovereign, who alone made and repealed law and was not subject to law himself. Positive law by this definition, according to Clarendon, paid no heed to the security of subjects and was contrary and destructive to the meaning of law in all Christian monarchies and republics, which had their various forms for making and repealing law. In language that he probably owed to the great common law jurist Sir Edward Coke (d. 1634), he chided Hobbes's presumption in imagining himself wiser than the English lawyers and learned judges who, 'by an artificial perfection of reason gotten by long study and experience in the Law', were far more competent to understand and interpret the law and its intentions than was the philosopher through his study of arithmetic and geometry. The writings of Coke, widely regarded as the oracle of the law, taught a generation of Englishmen that the monarchy is bound by law. In his *Commentary upon Littleton*, Coke described the common law as 'an artificial perfection of reason gotten by long study, observation and experience and not of every man's natural reason' and cautioned that 'no man out of his own private reason ought to be wiser than the law, which is the perfection of reason'.⁴⁵ Hobbes criticized Coke in *Leviathan*, chapters xxiv and xxvi and in other works for the legal principles he laid out.

In England the laws passed by parliament required the royal consent, which alone made them laws, Clarendon pointed out. But once

the law was made, the sovereign could not repeal it except in the same form in which it had been passed. He was obliged by 'the Law of justice to observe and perform this contract' and could not break it or absolve himself from it without the violation of justice. The judgements of the judges, Clarendon also noted, were the judgements of the sovereign who had appointed them; but the judges were obliged 'to pronounce their sentence according to the reason of the Law, not the reason of the Sovereign'. If the power of interpreting the law were vested, as Hobbes imagined, in the person of the sovereign, then the latter could 'in a moment overthrow all the Law'. He likewise indicted Hobbes's conception of positive law for depriving even the eternal, immutable law of nature of any independent force as a standard of law, since the philosopher had made it as much subject 'to the arbitrary power and discretion of his Sovereign, as he hath don the Liberty and Property of the Subject'.⁴⁶

3. RELIGION

Clarendon devoted the last third of his work to a review of parts three and four of *Leviathan* on religion. His discussion was highly critical, except for his agreement with the claim that the sovereign's power must include the government of the church and that spiritual and temporal power could not be divided between two separate authorities. On this one point he fully endorsed Hobbes's opinion, which accorded with his own Anglican conviction that the monarch was also the governor of the English church.⁴⁷ Generally, however, he found that the philosopher's religious principles were full of impiety and error. He questioned the license with which Hobbes used the Scriptures to support his arguments by 'torturing the texts' and 'putting such unnatural interpretations on the words, as hath not before fallen into the thoughts of any other man, and drawing very unnatural inferences from them'.⁴⁸ He disliked Hobbes's definition of religion as 'Fear of power invisible, feigned by the mind, or imagined from tales publicly allowed', which was implicitly too redolent of skepticism.⁴⁹ Some of the powers in religion that Hobbes attributed to the sovereign, such as the right to determine the canon of Scripture and to interpret its meaning, seemed to him dangerous and unwarranted. Especially objectionable was Hobbes's requirement that subjects should conform outwardly in their words and

actions to the sovereign's commands in religion, even to the extent of committing idolatry if necessary, which, Clarendon believed, would introduce 'such a license of dissimulation and hypocrisie, as is odious in the actions of civil life, but most detestable in the eyes and judgment of God and Man, in all acts which concern Religion'.⁵⁰ In the religious conceptions propounded in *Leviathan*, Clarendon saw nothing but the perversion of religious truth and an offence to the faith of nearly all Christians. Among those he reproved most strongly were Hobbes's disbelief in the Mosaic authorship of the first five books of the Bible, denial of the Trinity, discrediting of miracles, and rejection of the immortality of the soul, the existence of hell and eternal punishment. Clarendon finally summarized Hobbes's religious teachings in a list of eighteen articles, which he was convinced that very few Christians would accept. Unlike some other of the contemporary opponents of Hobbes, he never charged or implied that the philosopher was an atheist or irreligious; but he did picture him as an irreverent unorthodox thinker whose doctrines were harmful to Christianity and to the peace and happiness of mankind.⁵¹

Clarendon's *Survey* was a work of reasoned criticism and an able reading of *Leviathan* by a political man of great experience and knowledge. As a royalist, a steadfast believer in monarchy, yet opposed to absolutism, and a devoted servant and principal adviser of two kings, his unwillingness to countenance Hobbes's theory of sovereignty was highly significant. He firmly believed that the sovereign power of princes and rulers should be limited by law and was certain that Hobbes's type of sovereign, far from ensuring peace and stability as the philosopher claimed, would cause subjects to rebel. He could see no inconsistency between the sovereign's possession of supreme authority and his recognition of the restraints of law. Concerned for the security of liberty and property, he absolutely rejected Hobbes's arguments to prove that the sovereign was above the law and could not commit an injury or injustice against the subject. In taking this position, Clarendon demonstrated the strength and tenacity of the enduring English political tradition of lawful kingship and power restricted by law. His *Survey* is best understood as a confrontation between this tradition, which it articulates very clearly, and the grand simplifications and deductions of Hobbes's innovative science of politics with its radical conception of state sovereignty symbolized by the memorable image of the great

Leviathan who bears the person of the commonwealth and wields absolute power over his subjects.

NOTES

1. See Mark Goldie, 'The Reception of Hobbes', *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450–1700*, ed. J. H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), ch. 20, and Noel Malcolm, 'Hobbes and The European Republic of Letters', *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), ch. 14, for some discussions of the reception and influence of Hobbes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
2. Samuel I. Mintz, *The Hunting of Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 157–60.
3. See T. E. S. Clarke and H. C. Foxcroft, *A Life of Gilbert Burnet Bishop of Salisbury* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907), 134.
4. See John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 324.
5. Cited hereafter as Clarendon, *Survey*; I use the facsimile reprint of the 1676 edition (London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1996). I have discussed Clarendon's *Survey* and his relationship to Hobbes in a previous essay, Perez Zagorin, 'Clarendon and Hobbes', *Journal of Modern History*, 57/4 (1985), 593–616, reprinted in my *The English Revolution: Politics, Events, Ideas* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), to which the present essay is an addition.
6. Clarendon, *Survey*, 3.
7. Edward Hyde, earl of Clarendon, *History of The Rebellion*, ed. W. D. Macray, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1888), vol. III, 178–90; *Life* (Oxford, 1842, bound with the *History*), 925–31.
8. John Aubrey, Hobbes's friend and first biographer, mentions the connection between Falkland and Hobbes; *Brief Lives*, ed. Andrew Clark, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1898), vol. I, 365. On the Tew circle and Hobbes's relationship to it, see the discussion and references in Zagorin, 'Clarendon and Hobbes', 595–9; J. C. Hayward, 'New Directions in Studies of The Falkland Circle', *The Seventeenth Century*, 2, 1 (1987), 19–48; Malcolm, 'A Summary Biography', *Aspects of Hobbes*, 10–11.
9. Clarendon, *Life*, 923–4. For biographies of Clarendon, see T. H. Lister, *The Life and Administration of Edward, First Earl of Clarendon*, 3 vols. (London, 1837–8); the excellent short account by C. H. Firth in *D.N.B.*, s.v., 'Edward Hyde'; and the modern works by R. W. Harris, *Clarendon and The English Revolution* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1983), and Richard Ollard, *Clarendon and His Friends* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1987). The fullest study of Clarendon's intellectual and political

outlook is B. H. G. Wormald's *Clarendon. Politics, History & Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951).

10. Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, vol. I, 365
11. Harris, *Clarendon*, 29.
12. See Aylesbury's biography in *D.N.B.*
13. On Warner, Payne, the Welbeck group and Hobbes's relationship to them, see Mordechai Feingold, 'A Friend of Hobbes and an Early Translator of Galileo: Robert Payne of Oxford', in *The Light of Nature: Essays in The History and Philosophy of Science Presented to A. C. Crombie*, ed. J. D. North and J. J. Roche. (Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1985); *The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. Noel Malcolm, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), Letter 16 and notes 3-4, vol. I, 28-30, and the entries in Malcolm, *Correspondence*, vol. II, Biographical Register, s.v. 'Sir Charles Cavendish', 'William Cavendish, Earl, Marquess, and Duke of Newcastle', and 'Robert Payne'.
14. See Letter 21, Malcolm, *Correspondence*, vol. I, 40.
15. Aubrey noted (*Brief Lives*, vol. II, 16) that Warner usually spent summers at Sir Thomas Aylesbury's country house in Windsor Park.
16. Graham Roebuck, *Clarendon and Cultural Continuity* (New York: Garland, 1981), contains a bibliography of Clarendon's writings.
17. Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law*, ed. Ferdinand Tönnies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), v-x; C. D. B. Green-slade, 'Clarendon and Hobbes's "*Elements of Law*", *Notes and Queries*', 202, 4 (1957), 150; Hayward, 'New Directions in Studies of The Falkland Circle', 36-7; Martin Dzelzainis, 'Edward Hyde and Thomas Hobbes's *Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*', *The Historical Journal*, 32, 2 (1989), 303-17.
18. Clarendon, *Survey*, 6. Clarendon's papers also contain critical notes on *De Cive*, but it is not certain whether they are in his hand; see Hayward, 'New Directions in Studies of The Falkland Circle', 36-8, and Dzelzainis, 'Edward Hyde and Thomas Hobbes's *Elements*', 314.
19. Clarendon, *Survey*, 7-8.
20. Clarendon, *Survey*, 8-9; Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes*, 20-1; Clarendon wrote in January 1652, 'I had indeed some hand in the discountenancing of my old friend, Mr H'; quoted in George Croom Robertson, *Hobbes* (London, 1886), 72n.
21. His letters are printed in Stephen Wren, *Parentalia; or, Memoirs of The Family of The Wrens* (London, 1750; reprinted Gregg Press, 1965), 53-4.
22. See *The Political Works of James Harrington*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 83-90, 105; see also Perez Zagorin, *A History of Political Thought in The English Revolution*, new edition (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1997), 143.

23. Wren, *Parentalia*, pp. 53–4.
24. William Lucy, *Observations, Censures and Confutations of Notorious Errours in Mt. Hobbes His Leviathan* (London, 1663). An earlier edition of this work appeared in 1657.
25. Clarendon, *Survey*, 9.
26. Clarendon, *Survey*, Epistle Dedicatory *ad finem* and p. 4; Ollard, *Clarendon and His Friends*, 318. The *Survey* appeared in two impressions in the same year; see Roebuck, *Clarendon and Cultural Continuity*, 117.
27. Clarendon, *Survey*, 4.
28. Clarendon, *Survey*, 4.
29. Clarendon, *Survey*, 2–3, 5.
30. Clarendon, *Survey*, 189, 314 (mispaginated), 317–18.
31. Clarendon, *Survey*, 20, 79, 85.
32. Clarendon, *Survey*, 26, 27, 28, 29.
33. Clarendon, *Survey*, 29.
34. Clarendon, *Survey*, 32–3.
35. Clarendon, *Survey*, 37–8.
36. Clarendon, *Survey*, 44–50.
37. *Lev.*, xviii, 6, 90/113.
38. Clarendon, *Survey*, 56, 80–2.
39. Clarendon, *Survey*, 82–4.
40. Clarendon, *Survey*, 82–4.
41. Clarendon, *Survey*, 107–13. I have abbreviated this remarkable panegyric to the right of property, which is well worth reading in its entirety.
42. *Lev.*, xvii, 13, 87/109; xxviii, 27, 166–7/210.
43. Clarendon, *Survey*, 89–90.
44. Clarendon, *Survey*, 54, 56.
45. Quoted by Allen D. Boyer, 'Sir Edward Coke, Ciceronianus', in *Law, Liberty, and Parliament. Selected Essays on The Writings of Sir Edward Coke* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004), 250.
46. Clarendon, *Survey*, 119–22, 125–6.
47. Clarendon, *Survey*, 232–3; *Lev.*, xxxix. Clarendon called this chapter the most faultless in Hobbes's book and regretted that it was also the shortest.
48. Clarendon, *Survey*, 72–3, 197–202, 205.
49. Clarendon, *Survey*, 21, 315–16; *Lev.*, vi, 36, 42/31.
50. Clarendon, *Survey*, 214–15, 291–2.
51. Clarendon, *Survey*, 316, 319.

21 Silencing Thomas Hobbes

The Presbyterians and *Leviathan*

From its initial publication, and for centuries thereafter, Hobbes's *Leviathan* was a notorious book. Censors regularly targeted it and would eventually secure a decades-long ban on its vernacular publication in England. Its infamy prevented Hobbes from publishing on religion or politics after 1660 and cast a shadow of suspicion over his other existing works. The present chapter will examine the earliest efforts to secure the suppression of *Leviathan*. This censorship campaign occurred soon after the work's appearance and, though unsuccessful in its immediate purpose, was determined and extensive. The details of this censorship campaign throw considerable light on *Leviathan's* reception among its initial readers, before its reputation for atheism and heresy had fully hardened.

Among Hobbes specialists, the history of the censorship of his major works has been an orphaned subject. To be sure, the general prohibition on Hobbes's political and religious writings that prevailed after the Restoration is ubiquitously acknowledged. But this is typically treated as a natural corollary of Hobbes's general infamy among contemporaries. Historians have made little effort to detail the precise campaigns and factions that tried to gag the author of *Leviathan*, other than to note (correctly but imprecisely) that such efforts were usually directed by clergymen.¹ The explanation for this lacuna, it might be suggested, is two-fold. First, scholars long treated clerical opposition to Thomas Hobbes as unproblematic. 'Pious opinion has always been against him', Michael Oakeshott once remarked, and historians have only recently begun to free themselves from such blinkered dismissiveness.² Second, methodological divisions may also have allowed the history of the censorship of Hobbes to suffer neglect. Hobbes studies have been dominated by the 'Cambridge

school' contextualism pioneered by Quentin Skinner, J. G. A. Pocock, and others. This distinguished scholarship, with its roots in linguistic philosophy, is heavily textual in its sources and methods.³ The history of censorship, by contrast, has been the domain of historians of the book, methodological descendants of the *Annales* school, and of historians of civil society, who often follow Habermas in defining the public sphere in material and social terms.⁴ Linguistic contextualists often remain relatively uninterested in social and political context *per se* and often demonstrate virtually no interest in the material history of books, their circulation, and suppression. Book historians, on the other hand, often treat books as mere printed objects, the sale of which served certain classes and interests (enlightened booksellers and printers), the suppression of which served others (the courtly and priestly creatures of early modern monarchs).

This methodological incommensurability is particularly unfortunate, as recent scholarly trends in the history of censorship have rendered the subject potentially more useful to intellectual historians. Historians of early modern Britain, for instance, have discarded the old model of Christopher Hill and Frederick Siebert, where censorship emanated from a cohesive *ancien regime* seeking to crush all stirrings of pluralism and democratic debate.⁵ It is increasingly recognized that the various censorship regimes of the Stuart era were decidedly patchy in effectiveness. This has encouraged closer attention to censorship campaigns where they did occur, and a much keener awareness that efforts at censorship often served narrow factional interests, rather than monolithic forces of order. Censorship is thus currently understood as a highly variable phenomenon that might be revealingly patterned, providing valuable evidence for intellectual historians investigating the dissemination and reception of specific texts.⁶

Nevertheless, intellectual historians, and historians of Hobbes in particular have generally not attended to the history of censorship. The present essay will suggest that this history of attempted textual suppression provides valuable evidence of the contextual intent and reception of *Leviathan*.

Even before the appearance of his most provocative work, *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes had tested the boundaries of permissiveness in the world of early modern print. His first foray into civil science, the work now known as *The Elements of Law*, was among the most

notable scribal publications of the era. Hobbes does not appear to have presented this work to the print licensers, but its relatively wide circulation and absolutist principles riled parliamentary opposition nonetheless. Hobbes's subsequent flight into France served as a dramatic form of self-censorship. At the time Hobbes blamed this turn of events on parliamentary anger at 'words that tended to advance the prerogative of kings'.⁷ Years later he held unspecified clergymen responsible, presumably either the 'hot protestants' who had emboldened the Long Parliament, or the Laudian high-churchmen whose ecclesiology Hobbes disliked and whose desperate unpopularity had rendered absolutist political theory odious to the broad public.⁸

The first printed version of Hobbesian political thought, *Elementorum philosophiae sectio tertia de cive*, was published in Paris in 1642, in a small print run and for the Latin-reading elite. It too generated opposition, largely from clergy who distrusted its theological novelties and its unbending Erastianism.⁹ The second edition of *De Cive* (1647) was published in Amsterdam, perhaps the most liberal publishing capital in Europe. It thus skirted any censorship, although Hobbes certainly worried that 'the people who hold sway in the universities' would 'hinder the publication'. For this reason he urged his associate Samuel Sorbière to prevent the printer (Louis Elsevier) from seeking 'judgements on the book's importance from people who, in his opinion, he considers to be learned men'.¹⁰ Thus did Hobbes fear, and avoid, even informal modes of prepublication censorship on this occasion.

But it was *Leviathan* that would at last put scores of would-be censors onto Hobbes's trail. Hobbes's masterpiece – aimed at an English audience, deeply engaged with theology, and written with more rhetorical force and political daring than his previous works – would prove far more provocative than his earlier writings. Hobbes, of course, wrote *Leviathan* in France, probably in the years 1649 and 1650. The voluminous work, described somewhat optimistically as a 'tract', was entered into the Stationer's Company Register on 20 January 1651.¹¹ In this way the London bookseller, Andrew Crooke secured the 'copyright' to *Leviathan*. Crooke had, in 1637, published Hobbes's *A Briefe of the Art of Rhetorique*, and virtually all of Hobbes's subsequent works would be published by Andrew Crooke or his nephew William.¹² *Leviathan* was typeset in

early 1651, and Hobbes himself – from France – corrected at least some of the sheets in March and April.¹³ Expensively priced at 8s, the work appeared in the London bookstalls by the first week of May.¹⁴

Hobbes never labored under the illusion that *Leviathan* would meet with pervasive approval. Historians have variously interpreted the work's origins and immediate political implications, but among Hobbes's contemporaries at the exiled Stuart court, *Leviathan* generated immediate and intense anger.¹⁵ Its appearance set in motion a train of events that saw Hobbes banished from the Stuart court and returned to England by January of 1652. The details of this reversal cannot be narrated here, but however they are construed, there is ample evidence that Hobbes anticipated the controversy that *Leviathan* would spawn. Relations between Hobbes and the exiled English clergy had bottomed out, and *Leviathan* was full of fresh affronts to their sensibilities. Hobbes had warned Edward Hyde in the spring of 1651 that he 'would not like' *Leviathan*, and indeed he did not.¹⁶ But, though Stuart courtiers were able to hound Hobbes out of France, the arm of their authority no longer extended across the channel.

Hobbes undoubtedly printed *Leviathan* in London chiefly to reach an English-reading audience. But the decision also reflected the general collapse of England's censorship regime. The Stationer's Company had played a pivotal role in the prepublication censorship system that had prevailed, with only half-effectiveness, since the mid-sixteenth century. By 1651, the Company continued to stagger forward, but it was torn by political and religious factions, swamped by competitors in an increasingly voluble era and challenged by the decay of the licensing system. The prewar body of licensing experts, chiefly clerical, had melted away with the fall of King and Church, and particularly with the abolition of the prerogative courts of Star Chamber and High Commission. Ordinances of 1643, 1647 and 1649 sought to shore up licensing, under the control first of parliament and then the army.¹⁷ All licensing ceased for over a year between 1651 and 1653 until Cromwell, urged by the Stationers and guided by his own interests, revived licensing.¹⁸

Leviathan was thus printed mere months before the total lapse of the licensing system in September of 1651. Technically, according to the act of 1649, Hobbes's masterpiece should have been presented to

licensors appointed by the army. But neither he nor Andrew Crooke seems to have sought such a sanction, and in this they were not alone. The licensing mechanisms had been in disarray for years by this time, and England thus lacked any scheme for routine, prepublication censorship. (*Ad hoc* censorship – often by parliamentary order – was still common, a fact to which authors like Clement Walker and Marchamont Nedham could attest from their jail cells.) For the remainder of his life Hobbes explicitly affirmed that the publication of *Leviathan* had been facilitated by Interregnum London's lax printing environment. In the Latin translation of *Leviathan* he would recall that, after the removal of the bishops,

there was no longer any power among the English to determine authoritatively what was heretical, but all kinds of sects appeared, writing and publishing whatever theology each of them wanted. The author of the book mentioned above [*Leviathan*] was already living in Paris, using the freedom to write now made generally available.¹⁹

'All men did scribble what they would', Hobbes recalled in his *Vita*, 'Content and yielding to the present Government'.²⁰

The Interregnum indeed proved the most receptive publishing environment that Hobbes was ever to enjoy. His rooms on Fetter Lane were near St. Paul's Cathedral, the sun around which the universe of revolutionary London's print culture orbited.²¹ He funneled his vast correspondence through Crooke's bookshop ('at the signe of the greene Dragon'), and his own works apparently lay thick in the book-stalls. He was considered, indeed, among the most 'vendible' authors of the era,²² and all of his extant major works were published, republished, or translated between 1649 and 1660 (in either authorized or pirated versions). In 1650 'The Elements of Law' appeared in two separate volumes and apparently without authorization. *De Cive* was translated – again without permission – by Charles Cotton and was available by March of 1651.²³ The translator and wit John Davies arranged for the publication of a pirated copy of Hobbes's free will dispute with Bishop Bramhall.²⁴ *De Homine* and *De Corpore*, and numerous shorter tracts, were published later in the decade. After 1660 Hobbes's publishing career was badly constrained by censors. The Interregnum, by contrast, marked the apogee of what public acceptance his work enjoyed during his lifetime. But even during these years, such acceptance was far from unalloyed.

Indeed, the first campaign to suppress *Leviathan* was organized by a cohort of readers agitated both by Hobbes's work and by the general cacophony of the Interregnum's print culture. This effort to silence Hobbes began to evidence itself only months after his return to London from exile. In the late summer of 1652, a tract appeared entitled *A Beacon Set on Fire, or the Humble Information of Certain Stationers and Citizens of London to the Parliament and Commonwealth of England*. The tract, composed as a public petition, was signed by six members of the Stationer's Company: Luke Fawn, Samuel Gellibrand, Joshua Kirton, John Rothwell, Thomas Underhill and Nathaniel Webb. The *Beacon* petition opened by lamenting the 'Popish and Blasphemous Books' lately grown 'so numerous as to become a considerable (if not the greatest) part of our Trade'. The stationers, alarmed by the 'Venders of such Loathsom Ware', demanded that parliament 'suppress them'. On this, they urged, hung the question of 'God's staying with these Nations', as well as the 'Salvation or Damnation of millions of Souls' who had been placed on the 'High-way to eternal Perdition'.²⁵ Having established the perils of the moment, the Stationers offered a catalogue of twenty-three particularly noxious books. Most of these were Roman Catholic works, but also mentioned was the Socinian Racovian Catechism (which parliament had already burned), and 'Hobs his *Leviathan*'. Indeed, *Leviathan* received considerably more attention than the other works. Ten excerpts from the text were reprinted, by way of demonstrating its blasphemous credentials.

The authors of the *Beacon* petition brought their professional competence as stationers to bear in their appeal. Many of the blasphemous books, they cautioned, falsely stated Paris as their place of printing, but the books bore the hallmarks of London production. (This claim was based on the casting of the letters.) The stationers went so far as to make proposals for the suppression of scandalous print 'without any trouble or charge to the State'. They suggested a return to licensing, rewards for informers and firmer punishment of printers as well as authors.²⁶

The *Beacon* petition touched some raw nerves and provoked immediate controversy. A few months after its appearance, the senior London bookseller, Michael Sparke, published a supportive tract entitled *A Second Beacon Fired by Scintilla*, which urged parliament to unleash a 'File of Red Cotes' against the 'Pedlers, Hawkers,

Running Mercurists, and sellers of Popish Blasphemous Books'. These efforts were then countered by *The Beacons Quenched*, composed by members of the army fearful of reinvigorated censorship and 'Presbyterian slavery'.²⁷ In December the original *Beacon* petitioners produced *The Beacon Flameing with a Non Obstante*, where the army's 'wretched cause' of a 'Universal Toleration' was rancorously condemned.²⁸ In 1654 they followed this with *A Second Beacon Fired*, this time directed at Oliver Cromwell. The *Second Beacon* elicited ripostes from the Quaker Francis Howgil and the radical separatist John Goodwin.²⁹

The *Beacon* petition thus touched off a protracted tract war, one that at once exemplified and responded to the promiscuous print culture of Interregnum London. The episode is a rich one for those interested in the history of print and civil society. Most obviously, it heaps more dirt on the now largely buried notion that censorship was the weapon of centralizing states, resisted by 'enterprising publishers' who were themselves the 'natural enemies of narrow minds'.³⁰ In the case study before us, it was not the state moving to stifle dissent but dissenting printers goading the state, and their complaint was not tyrannical censorship but a dangerous permissiveness. For intellectual historians, however, it is undoubtedly the entanglement of Thomas Hobbes within the coils of the *Beacon* controversy that captures the attention. The original *Beacon* petition appears to have been the first printed attack on *Leviathan*. The tract, however, let alone the broader controversy that it sparked, has never been analyzed by scholars of Hobbes. Important evidence of the early reception of *Leviathan* within its initial context has thus been neglected.

Fundamentally important is the identity of the original *Beacon* petitioners. They all took book retailing (rather than printing) as their primary trade. This explains the economic motivation for their grievances. The economic status of booksellers decayed during the civil war (due to competition from hawkers), while printers flourished amidst the explosion of business.³¹ More importantly, the *Beacon* petitioners were Presbyterian partisans. This was clearly acknowledged on both sides of the dispute, but it is confirmed by other evidence. Many of the petitioners had handled titles for the Westminster Assembly of Divines, or for the prominent Presbyterian ministers who had dominated that conclave.³² A few of the *Beacon* booksellers were themselves published authors of Presbyterian tracts

combating the sects, such as Thomas Underhill's zealous manifesto against the Quakers, *Hell Broke Loose*.³³ This denominational profile is significant because it helps to explain the impetus for the booksellers' specific attacks on Thomas Hobbes.

Critics universally surmised that the 'filthy unclean frogs' and 'darke mindes' who had fired the *Beacon* were acting as the mere mouthpieces of its real 'Contrivers', Presbyterian clergy seeking to strangle free expression. This supposition was strengthened by the bookseller's motto, 'For Sions sake we cannot hold our peace'. (Critics read this not as an allusion to Jerusalem, but to London's Sion College, then dominated by the Presbyterians.)³⁴ However overheated this allegation might have been, there is ample evidence that it had some substance, and that the 'Beacon-firers' were indeed cooperating with Interregnum England's most orthodox clergy. Notably, virtually all of the booksellers were connected with the preeminent divine Richard Baxter. Baxter, among the great spiritual figures of the age and author of scores of devotional works, was a convinced parliamentarian but was alienated by the gathering religious radicalism of the 1650s. During these years he served prominently as the vicar of Kidderminster in Worcestershire, from where he launched his 'Association' movement, an effort to stave off ecclesial collapse by organizing orthodox clergy into an informal system of discipline and consultation. Baxter presented himself, fairly, as an ecumenicist, but his closest associates and the majority of the Association participants were Presbyterians.³⁵ Furthermore, Baxter was significantly linked with most of the *Beacon* petitioners. Underhill and Rothwell were involved in the distribution of his own writings. Others among the petitioners were close associates, handling his correspondence, procuring foreign books on his behalf and so forth.³⁶

These connections prove significant. In early 1652, near the time of Hobbes's return to England and a few months before the printing of the *Beacon* petition, a series of letters were exchanged between Richard Baxter and Thomas Hill. Hill was a Presbyterian member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines and a well-known preacher, who had delivered sermons ('plain, powerful, frequent, and laborious') before the Long Parliament. Since 1648 he had served as master of Trinity College, Cambridge.³⁷ Baxter, who knew Hill's relations in Worcestershire, corresponded with him over theological matters. In February of 1652, in the midst of this correspondence, Hill

wrote to Baxter: 'Your deep detestation of Hobbes his Leviathan hath awakened some of us to consider what is fitt to be done therein', In March Baxter responded with violent words against the 'horrid consequences in Hobbes' Booke', and urging that it be publicly burned.³⁸

This exchange has been unobserved by scholars of Hobbes, but it is rich with significance. Baxter was linked to virtually all of the *Beacon* petitioners, and Thomas Hill was closely connected with several of them as well.³⁹ Given this pattern of association, the widespread (and uncontested) assumption that the *Beacon* petitioners were acting on behalf of Presbyterian clergy, and the coincidence in dates between Hill's determination to take action against *Leviathan* and the drafting of the first printed criticism of the work, it is likely that the booksellers were acting in concert with Hill and Baxter. Such coordination appears more probable still when we cast our attention forward. Amidst the controversy over the first and second *Beacon* petitions – a storm that raged for three years – Richard Baxter himself entered the fray. The Rump parliament had not acted with energy in suppressing blasphemous works, and in a sermon before the protectoral parliament of 1654, Richard Baxter reproached the members for this failure. Speaking in Westminster Abbey on Christmas Eve, he advised parliament to establish regular means for ordaining ministers and catechizing the faithful. He also urged them to 'lay a penalty on him that prints or sels any Books against the Fundamentals or Essentials of Christianity', and to 'burn some more of this nature, that you may manifest a disowning of them. Specially Hobbs his Leviathan'.⁴⁰ Hobbes was the only author so singled out by Baxter. This assault, which used *Leviathan* to exemplify the enormities permitted by an overly licentious print environment, strongly recalled the logic of the *Beacon* campaign. It is thus significant that one of the *Beacon* petitioners, Thomas Underhill, published the sermon as a pamphlet in January of 1655.

Again, no action followed these pleas. (Cromwell's first parliament, a dismal failure, had been dissolved mere weeks after Baxter's sermon.) Efforts to silence Hobbes from this nexus of clergy and conservative stationers, however, did not cease. When the second protectoral parliament gathered in the autumn of 1656, Hobbes's would-be censors were again ready. According to the parliamentary diarist Thomas Burton, in January of 1657 a member of the Stationer's Company, 'one Robinson, a Scotchman, corrector of his Highness's press',

presented 'Hobbes's Leviathan to the Committee [for Bibles], as a most poisonous piece of atheism'.⁴¹ This was probably Humphrey Robinson, a prominent printer who had indeed handled the publication of several official edicts of the Protector, and was associated with the Cromwellian pressman, Marchamont Nedham.⁴² Robinson was also then involved in the distribution of Brian Walton's polyglot Bible, which is significant as his complaint against Hobbes was accompanied by a plea for the suppression of faulty bible translations.⁴³ He was also to handle the sale, later in 1657, of William Lucy's *Observations, Censures, and Confutations of divers Errors in . . . Mr. Hob's his Leviathan*. Robinson was not among the original *Beacon* petitioners, but he was a business partner with one of them, Joshua Kirton.⁴⁴ Humphrey Robinson thus provides yet another example of the axis of stationers and ministers that arrayed against Hobbes in the years immediately following the publication of *Leviathan*.

That alignment, indeed, may have generated one of the sharpest anti-Hobbesian books of the Interregnum: George Lawson's *Examination of the Political Part of Mr. Hobbes, his Leviathan*. This work appeared in 1657, and anticipated many of the constitutionalist themes that would mark Lawson's more famous *Politica Sacra et Civilis* (1660). Lawson's critique of Hobbes was his first published work, and it seems likely that this production by the obscure rector of More was encouraged by Richard Baxter and his circle. Lawson claimed that the *Examination* was solicited by his 'divers, learned, and judicious' friends at Cambridge, where Thomas Hill, cooperating with Baxter, had earlier tried to rally opposition to Hobbes.⁴⁵ Lawson and Baxter were themselves life-long friends, and the latter's *Holy Commonwealth* of 1659 would praise the former's *Examination* as the decisive rejoinder to *Leviathan*.⁴⁶ Lawson was, additionally, tied in with the Presbyterian stationers. He worked with Thomas Underhill, who was one of Baxter's publishers and among the original *Beacon* petitioners.⁴⁷

There are, in short, a number of highly suggestive connections at work here. Mere months after the publication of *Leviathan*, Richard Baxter and Thomas Hill exchanged dire appraisals of the work, and resolved to seek its suppression. A few months later, Presbyterian booksellers from within their circle launched a tract campaign against blasphemous works that prominently targeted Hobbes. This triggered a broader pamphlet war over censorship, during which

Richard Baxter and the Stationer Humphrey Robinson appealed to successive protectoral parliaments for a ban on *Leviathan*. This campaign, additionally, spawned several printed rejoinders to Hobbes. Nor do these links between the Baxter circle and the *Beacon* petitioners exhaustively account for the full Presbyterian ire aimed at Hobbes during the Interregnum. The Scottish Presbyterian Robert Baillie, commissioner to the Westminster Assembly and an indefatigable champion of the 'Genevan way', had fretted about Hobbesian principles as early as 1646. He had urged the exiled Stuart court to prevent the 'ruine of the innocent Prince [Charles]' by ensuring that Hobbes 'and such wicked men be put from about him'. (Hobbes was at that time the Prince's mathematics instructor.)⁴⁸ Even more notably, Presbyterians at Oxford – led by John Wallis, the one-time secretary to the Westminster Assembly of Divines – launched a sustained polemical war against Hobbes's influence. This partly concerned mathematics, but also targeted Hobbes's theology and ecclesiology.⁴⁹ Both Wallis and Baillie worked closely with the booksellers who had drafted the *Beacon* petition. Samuel Gellibrand handled virtually all of Baillie's many English titles. Wallis's anti-Hobbesian works were published in Oxford, by Leonard Lichfield, but both Gellibrand and Thomas Underhill handled his correspondence and sold other works of his authorship.⁵⁰

Hobbes's works were never suppressed by the successive Interregnum regimes, a fact that he recalled (even after 1660) with only thinly veiled appreciation. That does not mean, however, that attempts were not made to reverse that state of affairs. Until recently, these early censorship efforts – like much of Hobbes's Interregnum career – have been neglected by historians. The admittedly compressed account provided here, however, establishes that the first and most sustained campaign to goad the state into censoring Hobbes was launched by Presbyterian clergy and booksellers. This is of enormous relevance for those interested in understanding how *Leviathan* was received and how it functioned as a partisan political comment within its original setting.

Most critically, this history rivets attention on the contextual primacy of *Leviathan's* theological and ecclesiological components. As the present volume demonstrates, the religious context for Hobbes's works is at last beginning to receive its scholarly due. It remains the case, however, that much historical work on Hobbes sidelines this context, and foregrounds other themes, such as his constitutional

preference for monarchy, his interest-based theory of political obligation, or – most insistently, of late – his opposition to ‘republicanism’. But the earliest and most vociferous opposition to Hobbes did not concern these features of his thinking. Indeed, many Presbyterians were appalled by the regicide and were increasingly inclined toward monarchism and even Stuart loyalism (a point gleefully seized upon by critics of the *Beacon* booksellers).⁵¹ The Presbyterians certainly did not array against Hobbes for his monarchism, which was, in any case, a fairly superficial aspect of his political theory. On the other hand, Professor Skinner’s view that *Leviathan* was read primarily as a contribution to debates over political obligation also fails to account for these early censorship efforts. Indeed, both Richard Baxter and George Lawson formulated stinging indictments of *Leviathan* despite their own *de factoist* tendencies on the question of political obedience.⁵² Finally, far from condemning Hobbes, many Interregnum Republicans – Marchamont Nedham, Henry Stubbe, John Hall, William Petty and even (more reservedly) James Harrington – tended to praise him.⁵³ Hobbes’s Presbyterian critics, in any case, were not notable for their republicanism.

Rather, the alacrity with which anti-Hobbesian attitudes developed among the Presbyterians after the publication of *Leviathan*, and the vigor of their efforts to suppress the book, point to the determinative importance of theological and ecclesiological objections to Hobbes in the early reception of his work. It is not surprising that Hobbes was the object of such venomous rage among English Presbyterians. His own rigorously Erastian principles were often framed as an attack on those dedicated to the ‘Genevan Print’. All of Hobbes’s political works blasted aspirations for a ‘Covenant with God’, and his polemic on this point was clearly aimed at the National Covenant that had galvanized Scottish Presbyterian sedition in the late 1630s. Hobbes’s historical writings highlighted, and indeed exaggerated, the role played by Presbyterian sentiment in animating the rebelliousness of the Long Parliament. His spite for the Westminster Assembly of Divines was bitter and lifelong. As with many Erastians, Hobbes understood Presbyterianism as the equal of ‘popery’ when it came to usurping sovereignty.⁵⁴

But Presbyterians did not merely dislike Hobbes’s Erastianism as theory. They also feared its political application within the Interregnum context. The establishment of the Commonwealth, and then the dominance of Cromwell, killed off Presbyterian hopes for

a congenial national church settlement. Despite occasional ecumenical gestures from Cromwell, the leading Presbyterians found themselves locked in polemical dispute with the Independents who chiefly advised him. Cromwell's own religious inclinations combined dedication to a limited religious liberty with a fairly thoroughgoing Erastian ecclesiology. Church administration during the Interregnum – executed largely by centrally appointed committees – conformed to these principles.⁵⁵ This broad political and ecclesial context animated Presbyterian opposition to Hobbes. *Leviathan* itself was marked by a strident Erastianism and a certain rhetorical deference to the realm of individual conscience. The work had culminated with a politically charged endorsement of the sequential abolition (during the 1640s) of episcopacy and presbytery, and with an enthusiastic appraisal of the political virtues of Independency, which was ascendant in 1651.⁵⁶

English Presbyterians thus feared that Hobbesian Erastianism appealed, in a way that their own clericalism could not, to the political tenor of the era. This explains how *Leviathan* found itself in the crossfire of a dispute over censorship that arrayed the Presbyterians and their booksellers against the regime and its army supporters. The most persistent theme linking the texts and statements of this censorship effort was a pronounced anti-Erastianism. In his letters to Hill, Baxter condemned Hobbes's statist ecclesiology, particularly *Leviathan's* doctrines that 'Christ Doth but teach and princes Command', and that 'no ministers hath any power of governing or commanding'. Baxter's *Humble Petition* presented Hobbes as one who reproached the 'ministry of Christ' and was complicit in the collapse of corporate clerical church governance and clerical control of the sacraments and catechising.⁵⁷ The *Beacon* petition itself also struck this note and blasted Hobbes for teaching: that 'the Kingdom of God we pray for . . . is nothing but a Civil Kingdom'; that 'God hath a Sovereign Prophet and Vicegerent upon Earth, who is a Christian Sovereign'; and that princes could command Christians to forsake Christ.⁵⁸

These concerns also emerged in George Lawson's *Examination of the Political Part of Mr. Hobbes, his Leviathan*. Here, alongside oft-noted constitutionalist objections to Hobbes, Lawson attacked his theory of the church. Lawson was flexible on church form. (He was once a Laudian, participated in the Classis system of the 1640s

and was described by Baxter as a 'conformist'.⁵⁹ But, despite this flexibility, Lawson remained a confirmed dualist when it came to the corporate church and its independent authority. In this regard he was critical of Hobbes for having conflated the 'plain difference between Civil and Ecclesiastical Power, between the Sword and the Keys', and he insisted – against Hobbes – that the church and state were 'two distinct Commonwealths, the one spiritual and the other temporal', in 'Power, Form of Government, Administration, Laws, Jurisdiction, [and] Offices'.⁶⁰

By the same token Hobbes was defended – if indirectly – by Independents and other radical critics of the Presbyterians. For instance, the army officers who published objections to the original *Beacon* petition cast the entire dispute as a battle over the insidious interests of Presbyterian clergy, looking to return a 'Clericall yoaке' to the neck of the country. Hobbes would undoubtedly have appreciated their excoriation of these 'Kirkists', who were seeking to undermine the authority of parliament, impugn the integrity of Cromwell, and make 'Combustions in all well-govern'd Common-wealths'. He would also have had little cause to complain of their pronouncing 'Mr. Hobbes' 'very well able to answer' for himself.⁶¹

If we focus attention on this ecclesiological axis, running between Erastians and clerical dualists, Hobbes was much closer to the Cromwellian Independents than to the Presbyterians (or Episcopalians) loyal to the Stuart dynasty. This was the reason that the Commonwealth's newssheet implicitly praised Hobbes for attacking the 'Corrupt Clergy-Interest' when it reported his banishment from the exiled royalist court.⁶² This was also the reason that the Presbyterians sought not merely to answer Hobbes intellectually, but to check him politically, by securing the censorship of his masterwork. The first and most sustained Interregnum campaign against Hobbes was thus launched not by republicans or regicides, nor by defenders of divine right legitimacy, but by Presbyterians exercised by Hobbesian ecclesiology. And in that context, these clergy and their allies in the print industry did not fear a monarchical absolutist, but an Erastian theorist whose understanding of the church dovetailed with the broader ethos of the Revolution itself.

These contextual dynamics even work to explain one seeming paradox of the entire *Beacon* episode: namely, the decision of the Presbyterian booksellers to arraign Thomas Hobbes largely in the

company of Roman Catholic texts. To be sure, Hobbes was condemned as a 'blasphemous' rather than a 'popish' author, but there remains something incongruous about including one of the most anti-Catholic writers of the age in a manifesto against Catholic books. Doubtless the explanation for this is partly that 'popery' was a convenient bogey-man for the Presbyterians, an easily conjured spectre useful within their general case against 'that accursed Idoll of Toleration' and in favour of revived censorship.⁶³ Critics of the 'Beacon-firers', by and large, looked past the specific issue of Catholic texts and concentrated their own fire on the petition's 'High-Presbyterian' pedigree. Thus, the issue of Catholicism was perhaps perceived as something of a red herring.

But there may, in fact, have been some logic at work in throwing Hobbes into the company of the 'papists'. Immediately adjacent to their condemnation of *Leviathan*, the Presbyterian booksellers rebuked a work entitled *The Christian Moderator*, by 'William Birchley'. This was indeed a Catholic tract, 'pleading for a Toleration of the Popish Religion'.⁶⁴ Again, this seems a strange neighbour for Thomas Hobbes. It cannot, however, have been entirely coincidental that *The Christian Moderator* turns out to have included the first known printed allusions to *Leviathan*. *The Christian Moderator, or persecution for religion condemned* was one in a series of tracts written (under the pseudonym William Birchley) by the English Catholic convert and devotional writer John Austin. The work first appeared in 1651, would enjoy at least two editions and would be followed by 'second' and 'third' parts in 1652 and 1653.⁶⁵ It is a paradoxical fact that the first known printed exploitation of *Leviathan* appeared in a Roman Catholic text. Given Hobbes's violent hostility to Catholic ecclesiology and clericalism, this would seem to pressure the thesis that it was his own Erastianism that most strongly patterned the reception of his works. On closer inspection, however, the paradox resolves itself, and Austin's use of Hobbes in fact confirms the contextual preeminence of *Leviathan's* quasi-tolerationist Erastianism. For Austin's plea emerged from the statist, antipapal wing of the English Catholic Chapter. He associated with followers of the priest Thomas White, alias Blacklo, who were anxious to trumpet their own political quietism and were willing to obey any secular government (including the Commonwealth) that offered religious toleration.⁶⁶ The 'Blackloists' had tried for years to strike such a deal with

successive revolutionary governments and had become notorious as traitors among Stuart loyalists. Austin's tracts were efforts to keep such *politique* hopes alive throughout the early 1650s. His *Moderator* series condemned 'persecution for religion', marshalled authorities (clerical and jurisprudential, Catholic and Protestant) against 'coercency in Religion'.⁶⁷ He minimized the Stuart loyalism of English Catholics and assured the Commonwealth of their allegiance.

Austin wrote, in short, as a Catholic in Congregationalist clothing. He lavished praise on the zeal for 'Gospell-freedom' displayed by the English army and by Cromwell himself. By contrast, his caustic rhetoric flayed the chief 'persecutors' of the era: Presbyterian clergy, itching to heap 'intollerable burthen' on God's flock.⁶⁸ Seeking to prove the 'consistency' of Catholicism (at least that version cultivated by the French Gallicans and the English Blackloists) with 'civill government and civill society', Austin repudiated papal claims on a deposing power and on a transnational political jurisdiction. He specifically assured parliament and 'that great Instrument of our freedom, my Lord Generall Cromwell', of Catholic 'submission' and 'peaceable demeanour'. This was contrasted with the 'rigid kirkists', who had fought the Commonwealth on the field of battle.⁶⁹

In making such a case for the sanctity of conscience, the evil of religious coercion, and the need for religious sects to cultivate political quiescence, Austin spoke the language of the Cromwellian Independents. His rhetorical strategy of casting the Presbyterians (rather than Catholics) as dangerous usurpers was sufficiently plausible to concern the *Beacon* booksellers, who denounced his effort to put 'a painted Gloss upon the foul face of Popery'.⁷⁰ It cannot, moreover, have escaped their attention that Austin, in making his quasi-Erastian apologia for Independency, invoked the authority of 'that learned Protestant', Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes had supposedly 'cleared' the 'Papists of idolatry' for their practice of venerating images, by arguing that image worship was only idolatry 'in case the place or Image be dedicated or set up by private authority, and not by the authority of them that are our soveraigne Pastors'. The third tract in the *Moderator* series would return to 'the learned Master Hobbs'. Hobbes was praised for having condemned efforts to 'extend the power of the Law (which is the Rule of actions only) to the bare thoughts and Consciences of men'. Hobbes had also wisely

counselled that 'the Ministers of Christ in this world have no power to punish any for not beleieving'.⁷¹

Austin thus wrote as a Cromwellian Catholic, and he injected Hobbesian principles (or a version thereof) into his defence of the Commonwealth's Erastian and tolerationist religious settlement. This was unlikely to have been lost on the *Beacon* booksellers. It was not an accident that the first printed critique of *Leviathan* also attacked the author who had first dared publish his regard for the work. As advocates of Independency and sworn enemies of Presbyterianism, Hobbes and Austin were fellow-travellers with the dangerous ecclesiological tendencies of the age.⁷²

When drawn on, the incident of the *Beacon* petition unravels a web of interconnected reactions to the publication of *Leviathan*. Detailing these reactions, needless to say, does not comprehensively account for the reception of *Leviathan* during the 1650s, still less for its reception after the Restoration, when criticisms of the 'Monster of Malmesbury' proliferated. But the speed, vehemence and coordination of Presbyterian reactions against Hobbes were unequalled during the Interregnum. Moreover, the thematic focus of that censorship campaign became a touchstone within subsequent debates about *Leviathan*. Republicans, uneasy with Hobbes's theory of sovereignty, nonetheless rallied to his statist theory of religion. Independents, also suspicious of Hobbes's absolutism, could not entirely ignore his powerfully argued defence of the 'Congregational Way'. And, however much they despised their Presbyterian rivals, defenders of episcopacy essentially echoed their critique of Hobbesian ecclesiology. To be sure, Anglican efforts to suppress *Leviathan* during the Restoration would enjoy more success than the initial attempts of the Presbyterians. The ecclesiological critique that propelled these successful censorship efforts, however, had been set in motion years before 1660, in the political and religious context of the Interregnum.

NOTES

1. Exceptions are Noel Malcolm, 'The Printing of the "Bear": New Light on the Second Edition of Hobbes's *Leviathan*', in his *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford, 2002), 336–82; Philip Milton, 'Hobbes, Heresy and Lord Arling-ton', *History of Political Thought*, 114 (1993), 501–41.
2. Michael Oakeshott, introduction to *Leviathan* (Oxford, 1946), li.

3. Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', in *Visions of Politics, Volume One: Regarding Method* (Cambridge, 2002), 57–89; J. G. A. Pocock, 'The Concept of Language', in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Padgen (Cambridge, 1987), 19–38.
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